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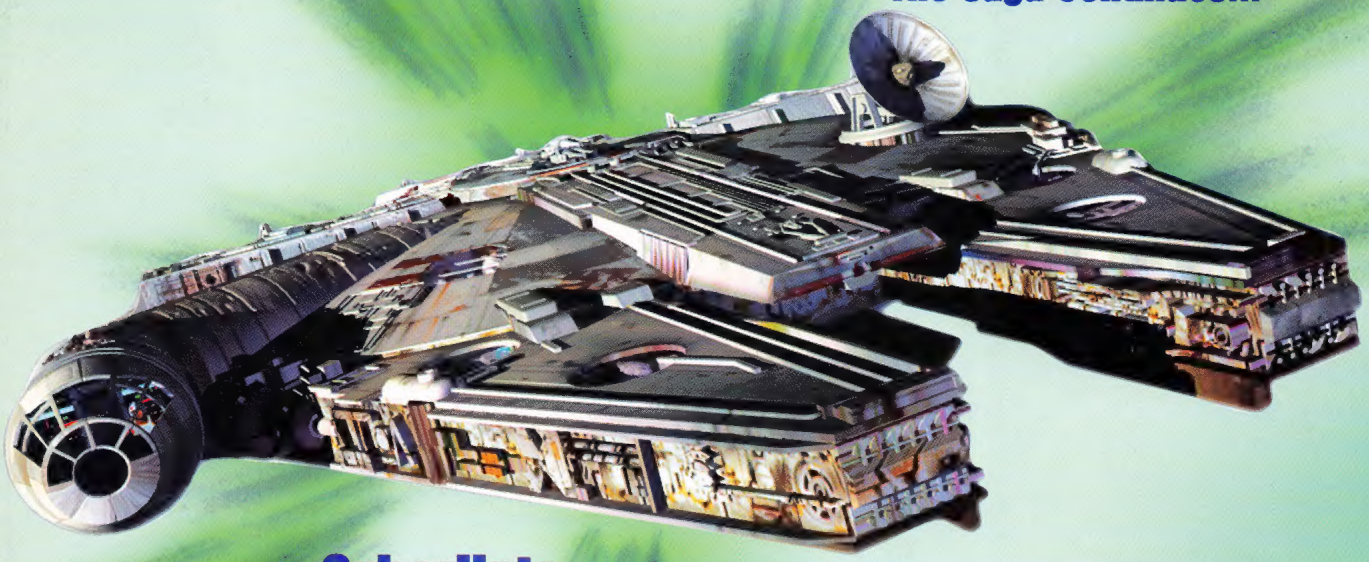

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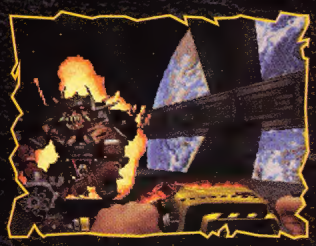

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main menu

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22 ***Rebel Assault II*: The Saga Continues**
by Ron Dulin
Will one of the most popular CD-ROM games ever be outdone by its own sequel? Featuring live actors and stunning computer-generated scenery, *Rebel Assault II* is destined to become an important new chapter in the *Star Wars* saga. Our roving reporter traveled to the LucasArts complex in San Raphael, California, to get the scoop on one of the most eagerly awaited games of the year.

38 ***Cyberia*²: Powered Up**
by Jeffrey Adam Young
Yet another sequel is gearing up to top its massively popular predecessor. The Xatrix team have been hard at work to ensure that their sequel to *Cyberia* will be more beautiful and more playable than the first. Will Xatrix succeed in combining their incredible graphics know-how with a great game? Or will it just be another CD-ROM game on rails? Jeff Young investigates.

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Computer Playthings: Incredible hard and software for all your gaming needs, including Falcon's Mach V system and the ubiquitous "more."
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32 **Over the Line**
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36 **Shareware Spotlight**
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Casino Deluxe

Tired of wasting big bucks on expensive hint books? Looking for concise walk-throughs that are a breeze to read? Well look no further! In this section, you'll find answers to even the most mundane questions, all for under five bucks. Featured this month:

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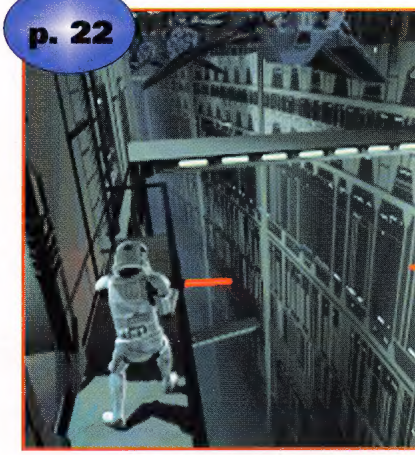

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On the Cover:

One of the most eagerly anticipated sequels of the year, *Rebel Assault II* features a seamless blend of computer-generated scenery and live actors.

How to Reach Computer Player

Computer Player can be reached on-line for comments and suggestions. We'd be glad to hear any input you may have about our happening mag. Electronic mail can be sent to us via the following on-line services:

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Or, if you prefer to contact us the old-fashioned way by writing:
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editor's bytes

The Next Game Genre

There seems to be a battle on the horizon. Not one of systems or of developers, but one of game types. That's right, a battle for the type of game play style that will dominate the hobby for the next couple of years. Will the RPGers of old manage to convince the electronic-entertainment community that their preference is the foundation for which the action purests owe their dominance? For an answer to this semi-prolific question, you have to look at the past as well as the future of the hobby.

Way back when, during the early 8-bit heyday of the Commodore 64, Vic-20, Apple II and Atari 400/800 series, electronic games made the genre transition from spaceship shooters to role-playing. This was also about the same time that corporations behind these systems were trying to position them as serious business machines. They wanted to get away from the "gaming system" image that they had developed. Every software company was producing checkbook and database manager programs. Boy, what a laugh. Can you imagine the stupidity running through the minds—or should I say mindless heads—of the corporate stuffed shirts running these companies? Too bad they didn't have the foresight to embrace this emerging industry, because the people who did are the ones in the forefront now.

> "It's much easier to use a computer and to play these games."

Anyway, back to role-playing games. The old 8-bit computers were a natural for this type of game. The worlds and universes programmers could create seemed limitless. Just add another floppy disk and bingo!—you had more characters and more scenarios. Sir-Tech launched the genre onto home computers back in 1981 with the *Wizardry* series, and the rest is history. But what happened later is that computer gamers were labeled as "nerds" and "hackers," as was depicted in the motion pictures of the time (see 1983's *WarGames* as perhaps the most commercially successful example). Anyone who played a computer game was a four-eyed, pencil-necked geek, or a malodorous slob with poor hygiene. The computer-gaming audience was a small, but die-hard and devoted group of individuals. Essentially, it remained that way for quite awhile, until games like *Tetris*, *Wolfenstein 3D* and *Myst* ventured onto the scene.

When these new genres of games came about, a whole new audience entered the realm. No longer were computer games limited to nerd types. Now they were accessible and played by all sorts of people. I think that part of this rebirth in computer games is attributable to the fact that computers themselves are now much more accessible. It's much easier to use a computer and to play these games—without a degree in computer science. I believe that the success of entertainment software publishers will rely heavily on their ability to produce games with mass appeal as well as to retain the attention of hard-core gamers.

—Mike Davila
Editor in Chief

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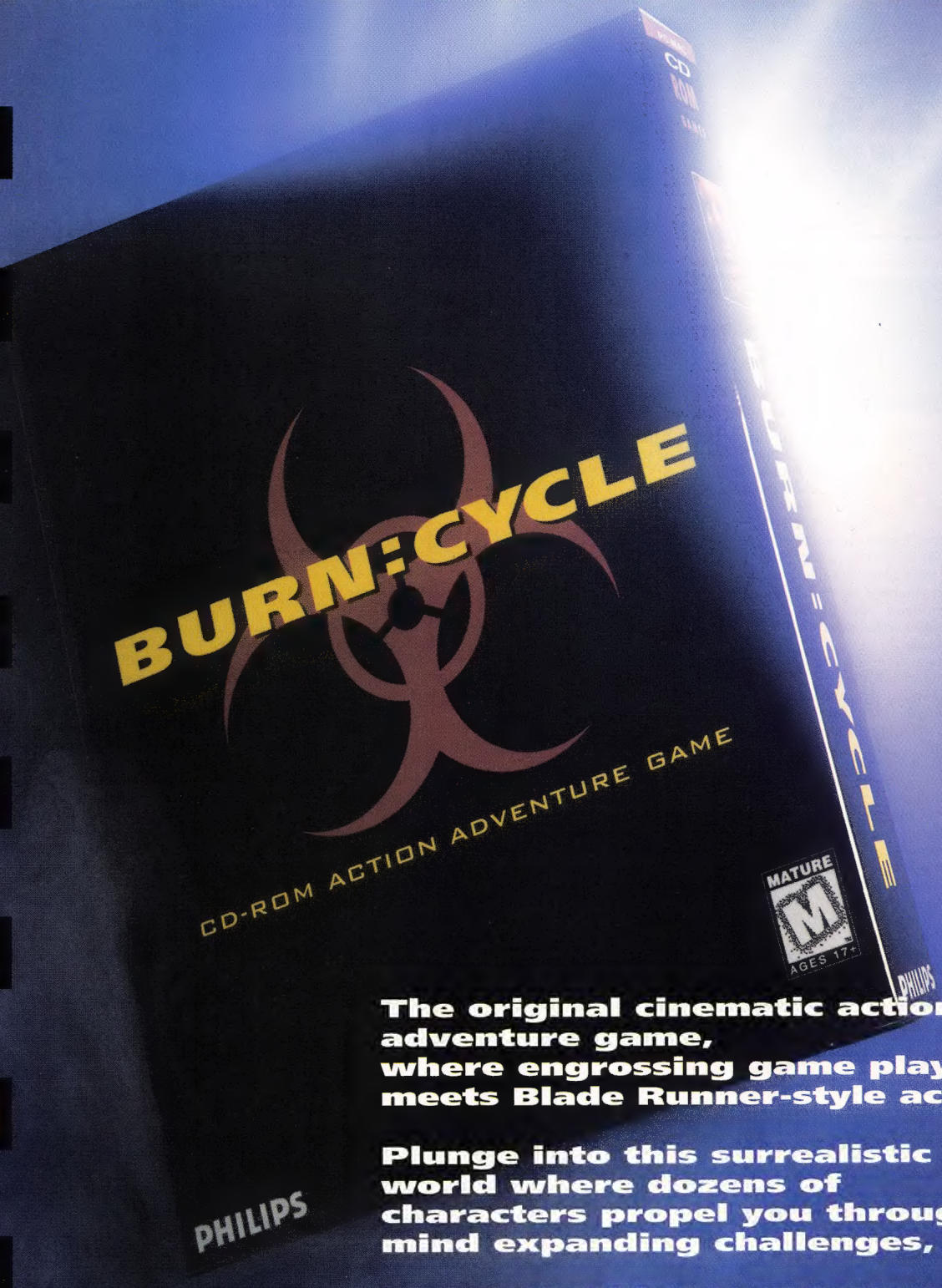

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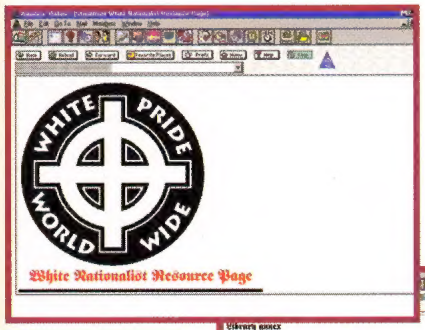
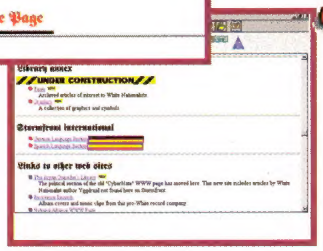




by John Patterson

The explosion that devastated the Alfred P. Murragh Federal Building in Oklahoma City in April of this year exposed a dangerous attitude of complacency toward the extreme right-wing fringe in this country. The twin spotlights cast by, on the one hand, a massive federal investigation and, on the other, a media hungry for sensational copy revealed a nationwide subculture of envy and hatred on the radical right, a subculture that appears to be thriving in the current political climate and which has been described by Christopher Hitchens as "that most dangerous of things: a majority feeling sorry for itself." One of the major factors ensuring the continued survival of the radical right's loathsome political agenda is, believe it or not, the Internet.

It was with a certain trepidation that we at COMPUTER PLAYER decided to go on-line with America's cyber-nazis. Would we be giving these idiots free exposure for their nauseating views? Shouldn't we asphyxiate them by denying them the "oxygen of publicity"? Well, yes, probably, but once we got to check out the kinds of nonsense these people traffic in, we figured we'd be putting off more people than we'd help to recruit. Besides, we certainly don't believe many of you are very susceptible to the kind of trash we're going to wave in front of your face right now. Hold your nose.

So we set the controls for the black heart of the 'Net, steering a course toward our destination: the Stormfront BBS, which calls itself a "White Nationalist Resource Page." We logged on and felt that sickening lurch in our stomach as the usual graphics came up on our screen: Gothic-type, German iron cross, bombastic, pseudo-Wagnerian name redolent of Wehrmacht campaigns—all the usual clichés, familiar to anyone who's made even the briefest study of the far right.

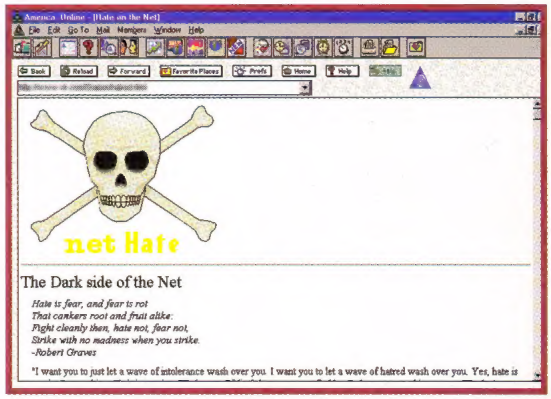
We surfed.

First off, we checked into a rambling piece by Louis Beam, a Grand Knight of the Texas Ku Klux Klan, entitled "Leaderless Resistance." We won't bore (or nauseate) you with its scabrous, vicious content; suffice it to say that it traded heavily in the kind of innuendo, rumor and lies that the far right uses to stampede certain sectors of trailer-park America into its corral. Beam was one of those Klansmen that burned Vietnamese immigrants in effigy in Galveston Bay in the early '80s, calling them by that infamous "g word" and so on. Nothing nice about Louis, once you only scratch the surface.

Then it was on to more obvious stuff. There was a lengthy piece on the siege at Ruby Ridge. The author called it "a massacre." We rather suspect he would have avoided using that word if he'd been writing about what happened to those 160 or so people in Oklahoma. Don't forget, this is a subculture that takes it as a documented fact that Bill and Janet planned and executed that atrocity even as they were washing the blood of Waco's Branch Davidians off their greedy, tax-grabbin' hands.

And, sure enough, the next piece was all about the Koresh cult's fiery demise at the hands of the Feds, and, again, the word "massacre" was freely used.

From there, it was on to Storm Warning: commentary by Stormfront's "correspondents." The tone of these pieces was unvarying, which led me to wonder if they were all written by the same person. In the end, it doesn't really make any difference though. Like dazed and semi-illiterate boxers after a fight, these people, however many of them there are, all rely upon the same sterile vocabulary, the same "pre-

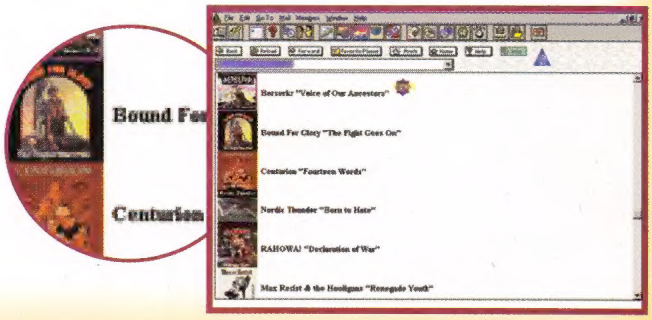

America Online - [Hate on the Net]
net Hate
The Dark side of the Net
Hate is fear, and fear is rot
That cankers root and fruit alike:
Fight cleanly then, hate not, fear not,
Strike with no madness when you strike.
-Robert Graves

sentable" phrases and ideas to distance themselves and their readers from the fact that they're peddling ideas that might end up costing human lives one day.

For cyber-nazis, the Internet offers two things. Firstly, it gives them access to a potential audience larger than they could ever have dreamed only a few short years ago, when they were stuck with mailing lists and 1-900 numbers.

Secondly, the fact that home computers and Internet access are still largely a middle-class phenomenon means that the profile of the type of person logging on to a nazi web site will be very different from the usual disaffected malcontents the right normally recruits from the foreclosure auction or the unemployment line. Most college-educated users will see things like Stormfront for what they really are—scapegoating, xenophobia and so on—but it only takes a couple of people as twisted as, I don't know, say, the Unabomber, to log on and pledge their undying commitment to this "cause" and we're all in trouble. The Internet, in this area at least, might be acting as an ideas forum or even a dating service for some of the most dangerous and unstable elements in our society.

The solution? Hard to say really. Attempts to regulate the Internet should of course be met with the fiercest opposition: It can be argued with some conviction that the 'Net is only the sewer, not the sewage itself. As with other issues in the media, it's true to say that the problem is with society itself and the 'Net merely reflects it. In this case, 15 years of society's and the media's steady drift to the right have brought the views of people like the authors of Stormfront closer to the mainstream. And, sadly, for the time being, the 'Net promises to keep them there.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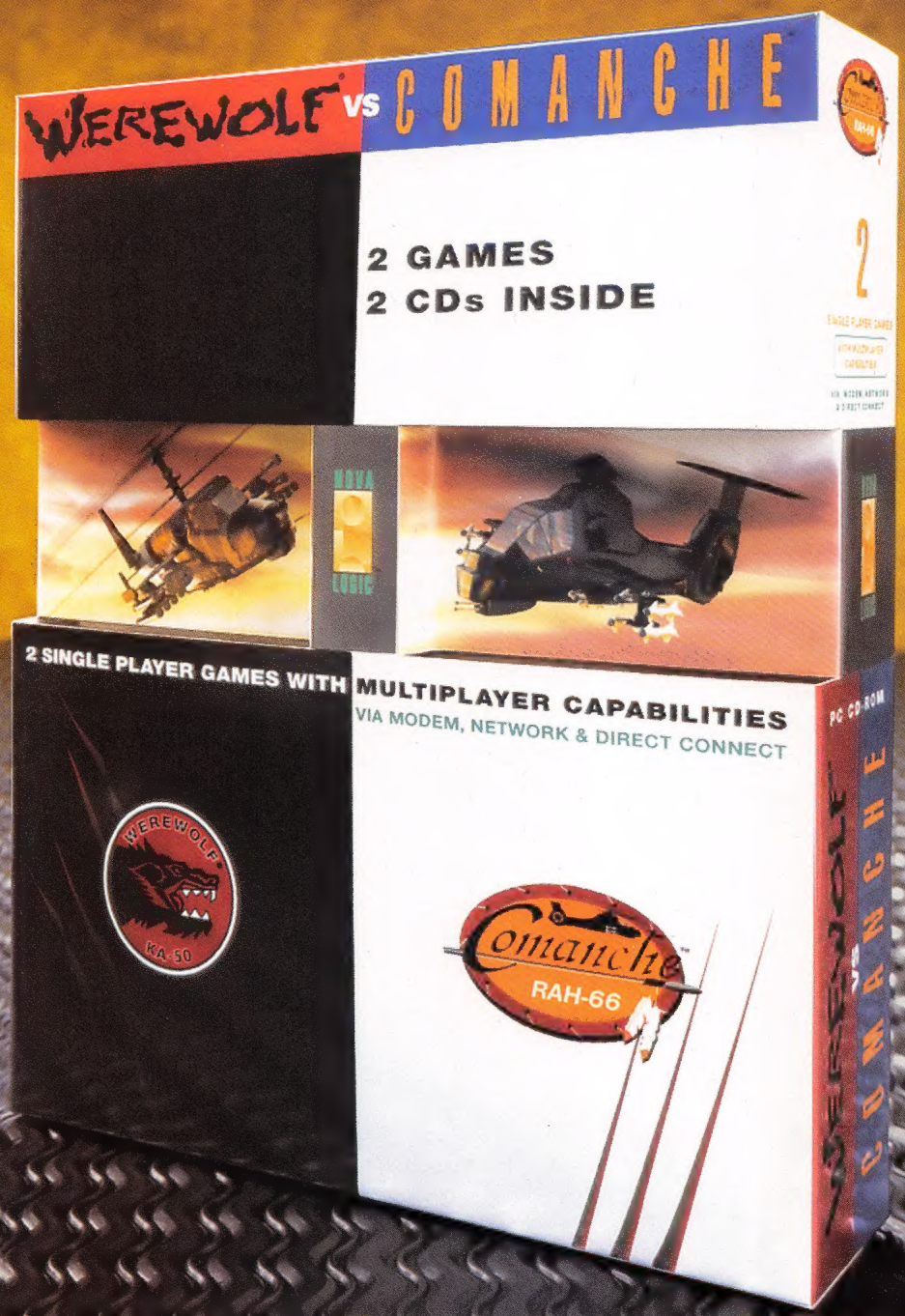

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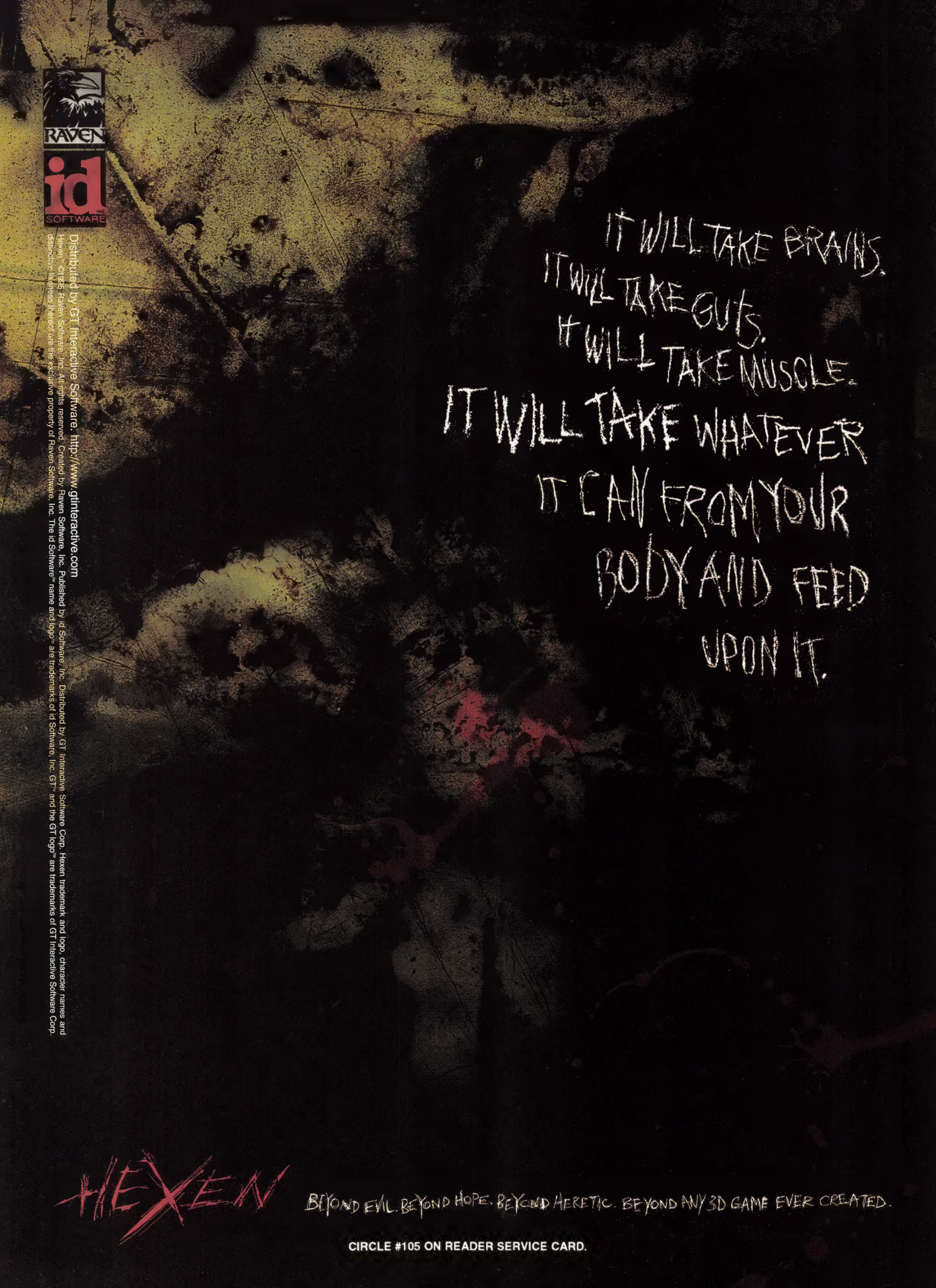

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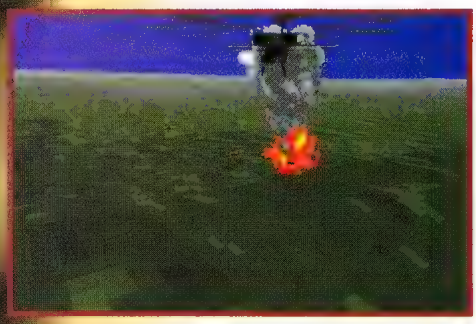
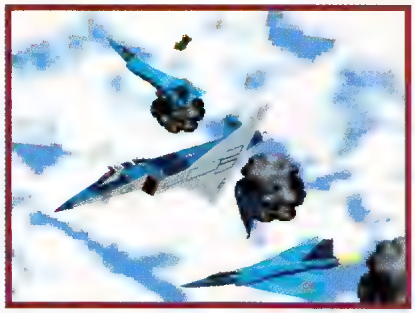
Succumb to a Jane's Addiction

Anyone who knows anything about the defense industry probably learned a lot of what they know from the myriad sources of military facts published by Jane's Information Group, the century-old publisher of *Jane's Defense Weekly*, *International Defense Review* and *Jane's Fighting Ships*, among others. Now Jane's has entered into partnership with Electronic Arts and Origin to lend its prestige and its huge vault of military information to a new series of sims under the general title of *Jane's Combat Simulations*. Two new, ultrarealistic sims, the first fruit of the partnership, should hit the stores by the end of the year. The first, *AH64D Longbow*, is a chopper sim that will put gamers behind the joystick of one of the wickedest, most lethal helicopters currently carving up the skies. You'll experience a highly interactive training syllabus before being thrown into real historical conflicts like Desert Storm and Just Cause, to name only two. Also included will be an all-stops-out campaign against Ukrainian troops in the Baltic states. *Super Fighters* (a working title) is a modern jet combat sim, based on experimental fighter aircraft with radical designs. You'll be able to perform extreme maneuvers in dogfights and use super-stealth abilities for deep penetration strikes against enemy forces and strategic targets.





For more information, contact Electronic Arts at: 415.513.7661, or Origin Systems at: 512.434.4263.

Discovery Discs

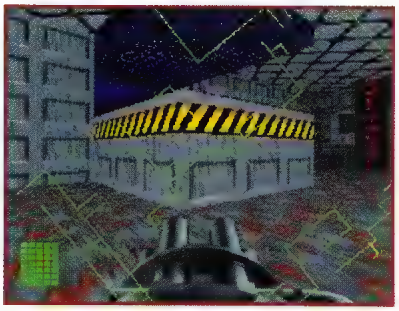
The growth of education-based software on CD-ROM takes another step forward with GTE Interactive's new five-disc *Discovery Pack*, now available for PC and Mac. The package is aimed at children age three to nine and focuses each of its discs on a different educational goal. *Vitsie Visits the Ocean* uses an adventure-based format to teach your mini-marine-biologists about the denizens of the murky depths of the deep blue sea. *Monster Lab* uses...uh, monsters to help kids build their memory skills. Exploration is the theme of *Professor Wise and His X-Ray Eyes*, which takes the user on a search for hidden objects in places like an Egyptian pyramid and a toy factory. *Lost and Found* is dedicated to teaching kids about discovery and, finally, *Night Light* takes ahold of that age-old fear of the dark and imparts lessons in, of all things, courage.... The five-disc pack retails for $19.95.

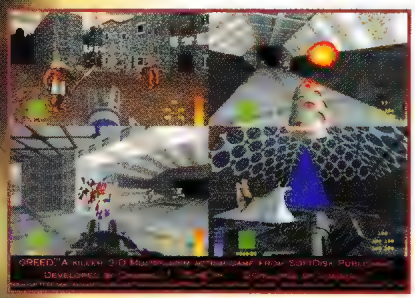
For more information, contact GTE Interactive at: 800.GTE.TODAY.

Get Ready, Greedheads

Softdisk Publishing, which I'm guessing has to be the biggest multimedia concern based in Shreveport, Louisiana (home of the Louisiana Hayride, if memory serves...), has developed a wild-sounding new 3-D multiplayer game called *GREED*, multilevel demos of which have been available on the Internet since August 1.

GREED offers multiplayer modem play, a hairy storyline, plus—and at this my ears prick up and all my little hairs stand on end—"an ultra-carnage atmosphere." Say no more: Gimme, gimme!





Among the features on offer are sloped and curved floors and ceilings, fully rendered and animated cut-scenes and a CD-quality soundtrack to keep your booty shakin' as the blood and the viscera flow. Within the game itself, particularly inventive features include the Holo-Suit, which enables a player to take on the appearance of any other object or character in the game, including monsters or other players. Trippy! Also, there will be squad-based AI, which will apparently redefine the meaning of the word BERSERK! Insta-Wall will allow you to create walls through which nothing can pass. My favorite device is the Portable Hole (the mind reels), which has two ends that players can carry and drop where they wish. Once the second is dropped, you can jump in and end up wherever you left the first one. Trippier!

GREED uses software licensed from *Doom*-sters Id Software, quite a few of whose employees started out working at Softdisk. The full version of *GREED* will retail for $39.95. Sounds promising.

For more information, contact Softdisk Publishing at: 318.221.8718.

The ROM Riddler

If you've ever sat in front of your screen playing some lame-o puzzle game, saying to yourself, "I could make a better game than this piece of crap," then the time has come to put your money where your mouth is. Centron Software has put together a puzzle-making kit for *Windows 3.1* called *Puzzle Power* that will enable you to make your own word games and brainteasers, complete with sound, video and pictures. Crosswords on grids up to 30x30 squares large; word search grids hiding words (and clues and enigmas...) horizontally, vertically and diagonally; kriss kross puzzles and cryptograms—all these word-based game formats, in various fonts, colors and sizes, are available to you to demonstrate your inventiveness. Also included are 500 classic crosswords from the *New York Times* and a *Roget's Electronic Thesaurus*.

For more information, contact Centron Software at: 910.692.2009.

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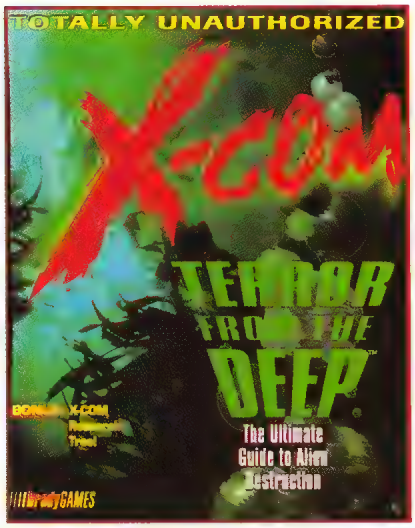
Local Boys Make Good

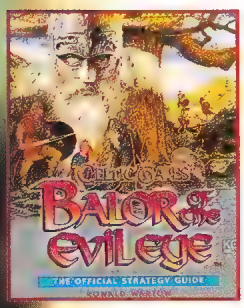


Like proud parents, all of us here at COMPUTER PLAYER Mansion have been handing round the cigars and congratulating one of our very own, Jeff James, no stranger to these pages, on the publication of *Totally Unauthorized X-COM: Terror From the Deep*. As if that weren't enough to swell our collective breast with parental pride, it transpires that *another* of our regular contributors, Bernard Dy, made a number of not insubstantial contributions, most notably penning chapter four and creating most of the maps. The 360 meaty, tips-'n'-hint-filled pages will provide you with every conceivable means of navigating your way through the sequel to the hugely successful *X-COM: UFO Defense*. *Totally Unauthorized* gives the gamer soup-to-nuts guidelines on everything from creating bases and populating them, to taking on the invaders and driving them from the planet. It includes an *X-COM* quick reference card listing the most effective weapon in a given situation; *X-COM* utilities and on-line resources; maps of USO alien ships and artifact sites; and an interview with the developer behind the original *X-COM*.

Totally Unauthorized X-COM: Terror From the Deep by Jeff James, contributions by Bernard Dy, is published by BradyGames at $17.99.

To order a copy, contact Brady Publishing at: 800.428.5331.

Strategy Overdrive



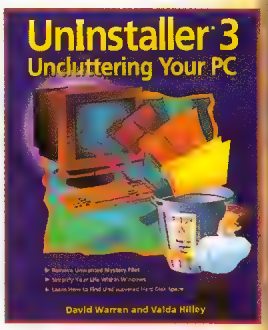
Additional strategy guides that came our way and caught our attention this month were Glen Edridge's *Discworld: The Official Strategy Guide* and *Celtic Tales: Balor of the Evil Eye: The Official Strategy Guide*, by Ronald Wartow (Prima, both $19.95). The *Discworld* tome aids the gamer in solving the puzzles in Terry Pratchet's bizarre fantasy. Help Rincewind the Wizard travel through time and solve the puzzles that will rid the kingdom of Ankh-Morpork of the evil dragon that torments it. The *Celtic Tales* publication will take the player through the various subtleties that hold sway in this medieval role-playing game. Learn to govern your tribes effectively, form alliances, recruit new followers and ward off attackers.

Each guide comes packed with maps, screen shots, clues, hints and tables, and it guarantees that each game will be a richer experience.

For more information, contact Prima Publishing at: 916.632.4400.

Tech-heads' Heaven

Prima Publishing has added three more titles to its ever-expanding PC-related technical books series. *Stacker Multimedia*, by Stuart Stuple, takes the reader through the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of *Stacker*, the disc compression program that lets you run MS-DOS programs with greater speed and efficiency. It includes (as an exclusive) the Emergency Room, which answers those questions and problems that arise most frequently, as well as a glossary of terms and *Stacker* commands. Stack away to your heart's content!



Moving right along, we come next to *Sound Blaster: Making WAVes With Multimedia*, by David Day and Valda Hilley, which enables you to maximize your PC's capacity for sound, music and—should the mood take you—NOISE! From installation and creating and recording music, through to having the PC read files out loud, you'll find everything you need here to make sweet music with your PC.

Bringing up the rear, and very much like the guy following the parade with a shovel and a bag, is *Uninstaller 3: Uncluttering Your PC*. David Warren and Vald A. Hilley will show how to...uh...install *Uninstaller* (it says here) and use it to uncover valuable hard drive space by removing unneeded and unwanted files. Sweep the house and generally put out the cyber trash cans, the better to free up a little room for clearheaded computing.

All three titles retail for $19.95.

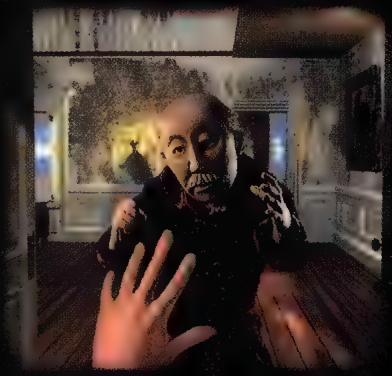
For more information, contact Prima Publishing at: 916.632.4400.

ROMic Trading Cards

Two different but burgeoning fields—the computer-gaming industry and the trading card market—have crossed over for the very first time. SkyBox International recently unveiled a demo of *SkyBox: Into the Vortex*, its graphic adventure CD-ROM game, at the San Diego Comic-Con, and the game's release this fall will be accompanied by the release of a 90-card set of trading cards featuring artwork that inspired the game, by such artists as Julie Bell, Dave McKean, Brom, Brian Stelfreeze and Dave Dorman. The Mac/PC-compatible game will cost you $29.95 (and will include three free packs of cards) and each six-card pack will retail for $1.79.

For more information, contact SkyBox at: 919.933.4700.

These are the hands that open the doors to nightmare worlds



of fear and death and madness, too where your choices seal

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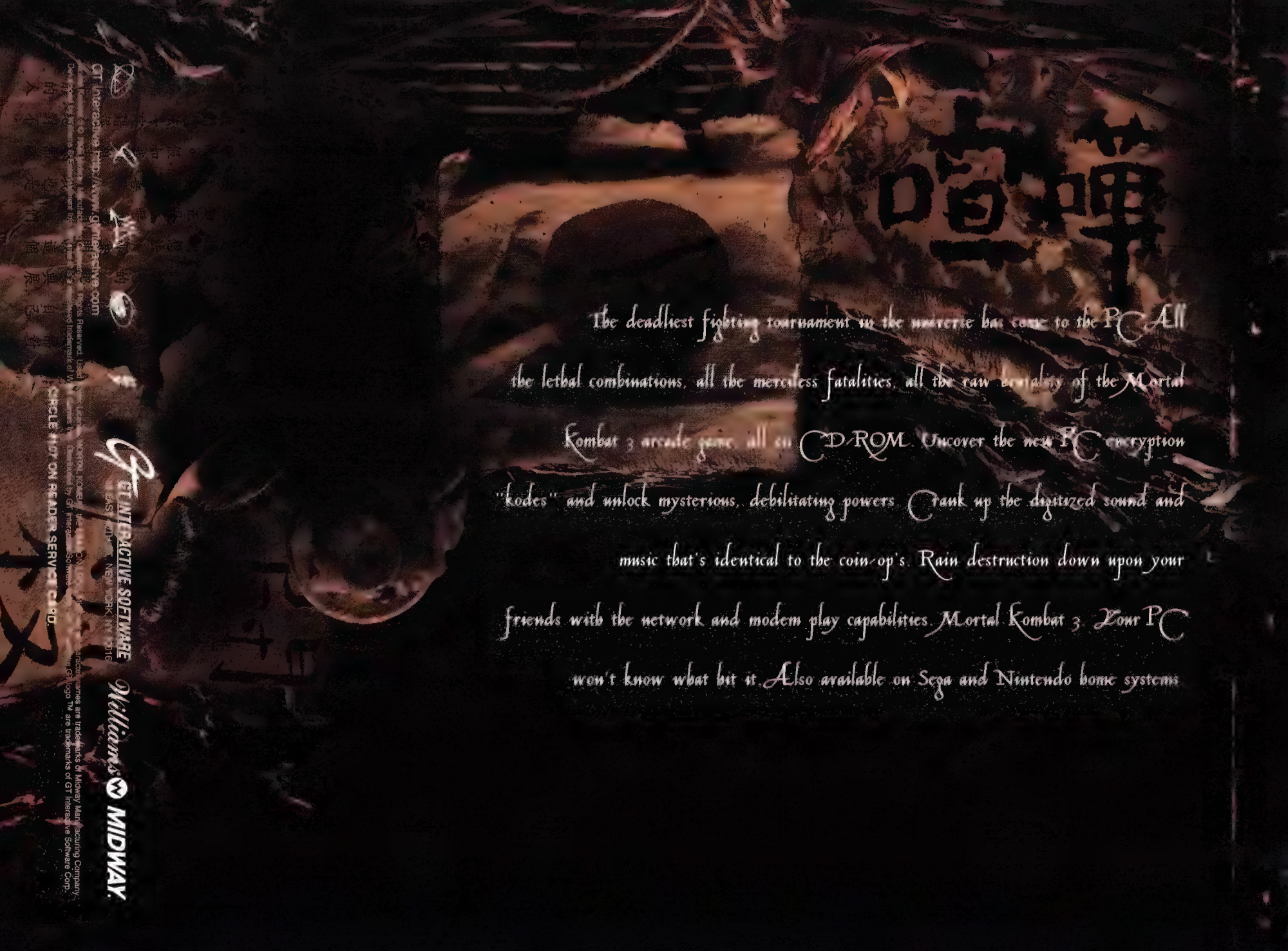
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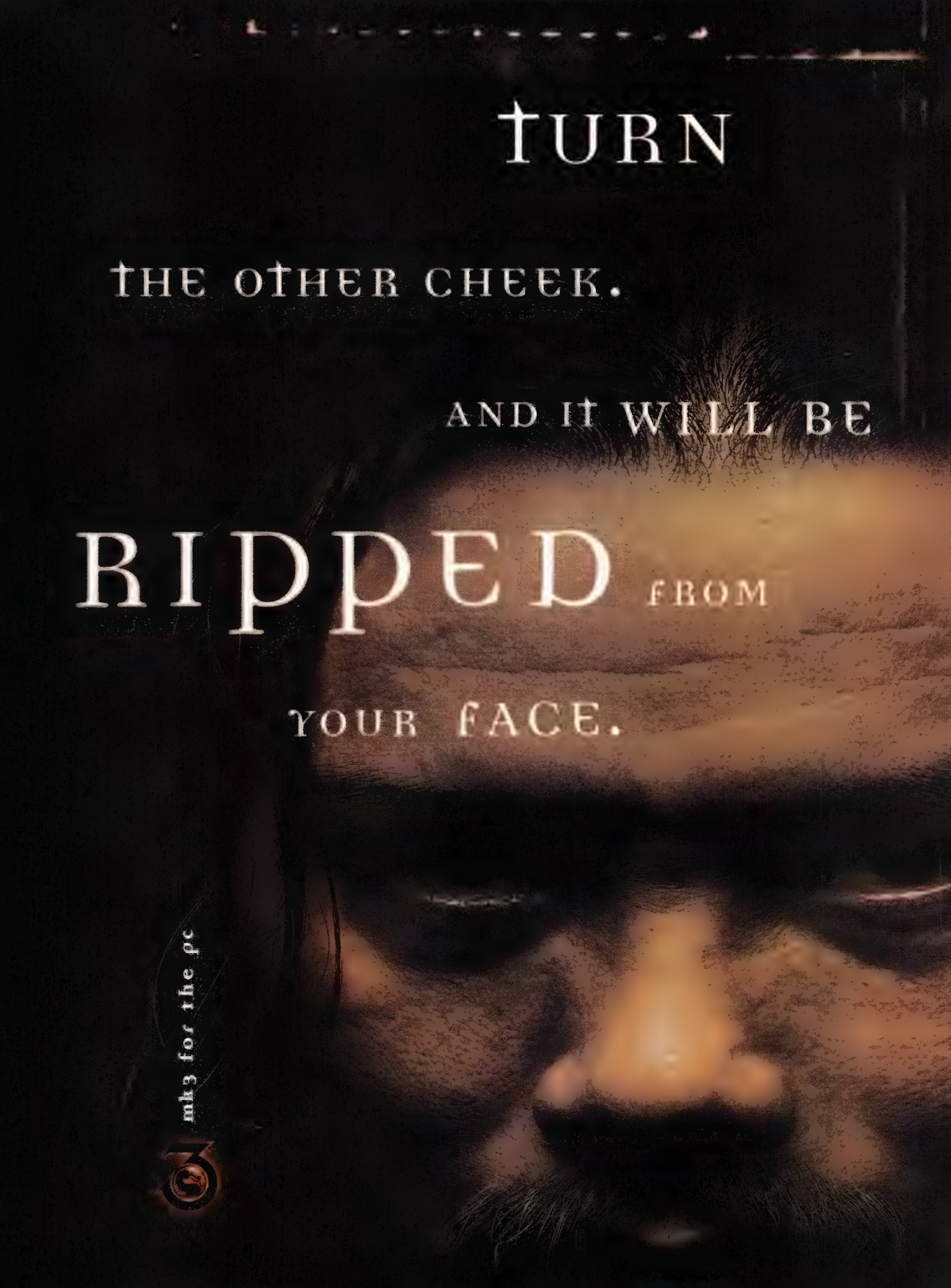
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AND IT WILL BE
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shelf-burners for November '95

ibm pc

Top 20 IBM PC Games (MS-DOS) (Windows)

1. ***Microsoft Flight Simulator** by Microsoft*
2. *Myst** by Brøderbund
3. *Dark Forces** by LucasArts
4. *Doom II** by GT Interactive
5. *NASCAR Racing** by Papyrus
6. *Full Throttle** by LucasArts
7. *Descent** by Interplay
8. *Virtual Pool** by Interplay
9. *SimCity 2000* by Maxis
10. *5 Ft. 10 Pak Special Edition* by Sirius
11. *SimTower** by Maxis
12. *Doom Companion** by Viacom
13. *Flight Unlimited** by Virgin
14. *Links* by Access
15. *Rise of the Triad** by Formgen
16. *Microsoft Entertainment, Best of* by Microsoft
17. *NBA '95** by Electronic Arts
18. *Tony LaRussa Baseball** by Strategic Simulations
19. *DIZone Collector's Edition* by Wizard Works
20. *The 7th Guest* by Virgin

*Games available on CD-ROM

cd-rom

Top 10 CD-ROM Games*

1. ***Myst* by Brøderbund**
2. *Dark Forces* by LucasArts
3. *Microsoft Flight Simulator* by Microsoft
4. *Print Shop Deluxe CD Ensemble* by Brøderbund
5. *NASCAR Racing* by Papyrus
6. *Full Throttle* by LucasArts
7. *Doom II* by GT Interactive
8. *Descent* by Interplay
9. *Virtual Pool* by Interplay
10. *Lion King Storybook* by Disney

*Includes both Macintosh and IBM PC versions

mac

Top 10 Macintosh Games

1. ***Myst** by Brøderbund*
2. *Dark Forces** by LucasArts
3. *SimCity 2000** by Maxis
4. *Star Wars Rebel Assault** by LucasArts
5. *Marathon* by Bungee
6. *Links Pro* by Access
7. *SimTower* by Maxis
8. *Doom II by GT* Interactive
9. *Mindscape CD Mac Pack** by Mindscape
10. *Wolfenstein 3D* by Interplay

*Games available on CD-ROM

b&t cd-rom

Baker and Taylor's Top 10 Additional CD-ROM Sellers for July 1995

1. ***5 Ft. 10 Pak Special Edition* by Sirius**
2. *Just Grandma and Me* by Random House
3. *Lion King Animated* by Disney
4. *Grolier Multimedia* by Grolier
5. Star Trek: TNG "A Final Unity" by Spectrum HoloByte
6. Myst (Mac) by Brøderbund
7. *Solar Wonders of Learning* by National Geographic
8. *Multimedia Mammals* by National Geographic
9. *Little Monster* by Random House
10. *Aladdin Activity* by Disney.

hard drive

Top 5 Hard Drive Games

Mike Davila

1. *Stonekeep* by Interplay (IBM PC CD)
2. *Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure* by Activision (IBM PC CD)
3. *Fury³* by Microsoft (IBM PC CD)
4. *MechWarrior 2* by Activision (IBM PC CD)
5. *Exploration* by Interactive Magic (IBM PC CD)

Ron Dulin

1. *Head 2 Head* by Formgen (IBM PC)
2. *MechWarrior 2* by Activision (IBM PC CD)
3. *Power Pete* by MacPlay (Mac CD)
4. *Phantasmagoria* by Sierra (IBM PC CD)
5. *Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure* by Activision (IBM PC CD)

John Patterson

1. *Doom II* by GT Interactive (Mac)
2. *Power Pete* by MacPlay (Mac CD)
3. *Dark Forces* by LucasArts (IBM PC/Mac CD)
4. *Virtual Pool* by Interplay (IBM PC CD)
5. *Rise of the Triad* by Formgen (IBM PC CD)

All information (except Baker and Taylor's Top 10) taken from *PC Data's Hits List* of top-selling software for the month of June 1995. List is based on units sold by 16 retail chains, representing over 4,500 stores. For more information, contact *PC Data* at: 703.435.1025.

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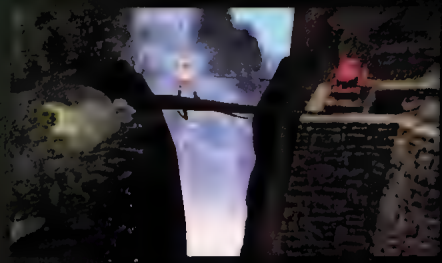

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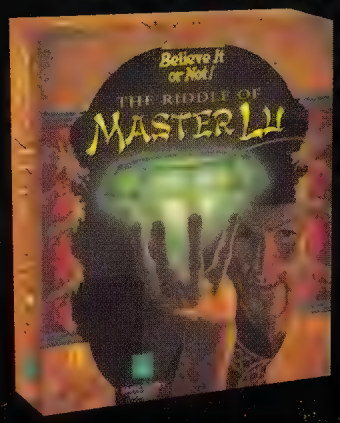

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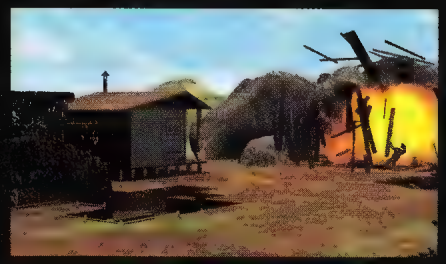

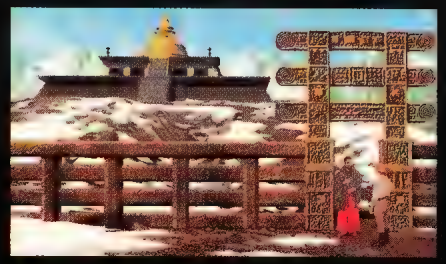

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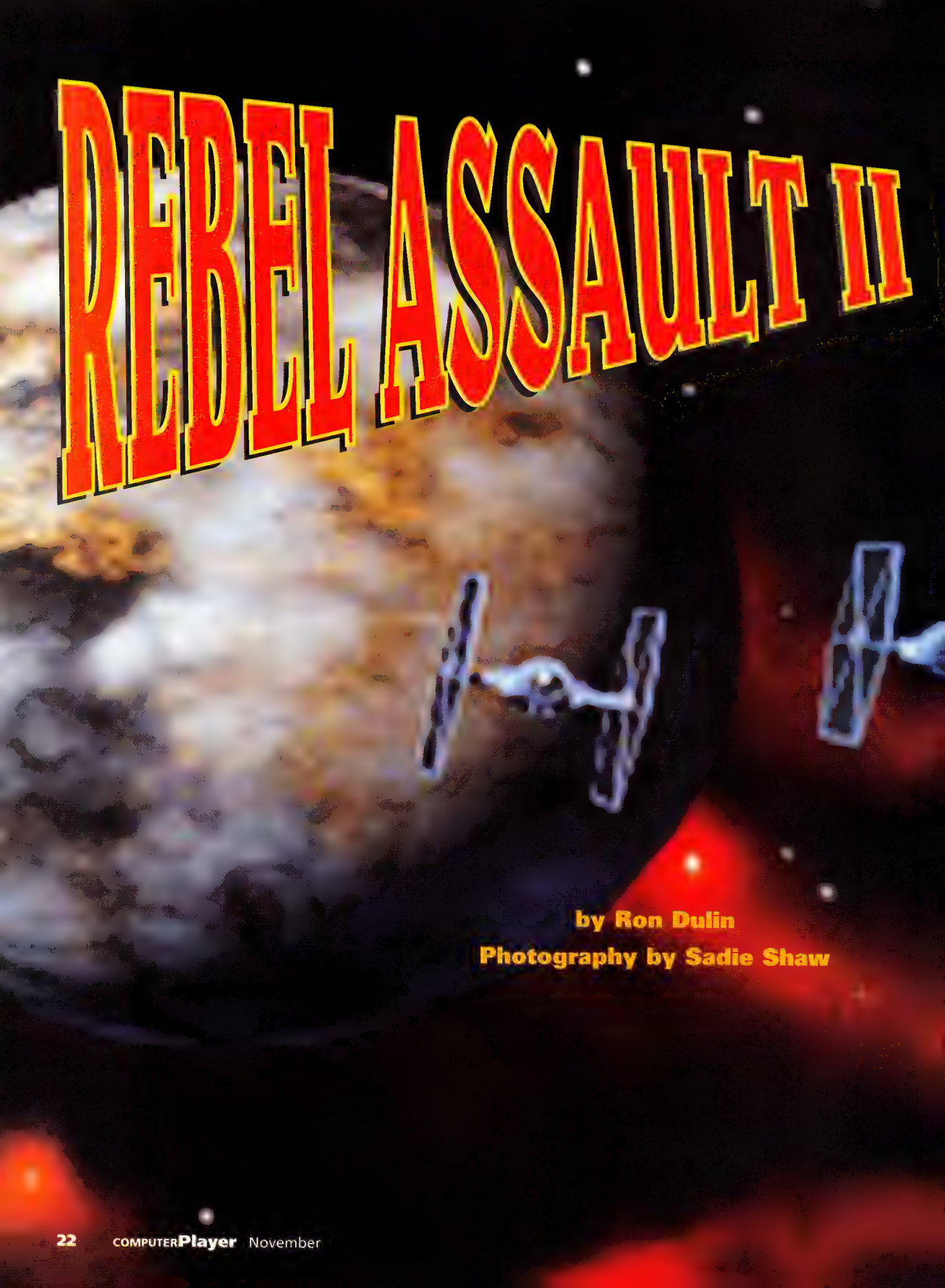
REBEL ASSAULT II



by Ron Dulin

Photography by Sadie Shaw

The *Star Wars* saga is—with the possible exception of *Return of the Jedi*—one of the most important pop culture icons of the last quarter-century. We live in a nation whose ascending generation was weaned on X-Wings and Star Destroyers. Most young American adults know more about the assault on the Death Star than they do about the Tet Offensive, and more could name the "ship that did the Kessel Run in less than 12 parsecs" before they could name the *Enola Gay*. And while this may be a somewhat frightening revelation, it goes to show how incredibly influential the original film trilogy has been.

Now the newest chapter in the saga is rapidly approaching its release date. Featuring the first authorized *Star Wars* footage since *Return of the Jedi*, the new installment features everything you'd expect from a big-budget production with the *Star Wars* moniker attached: new characters, frightening Imperial conspiracies and amazing special effects. But this new addition to the canon is not the first film in the long-awaited new trilogy. It is *Rebel Assault II*, the sequel to one of the most popular CD-ROM games ever and one of LucasArts' most ambitious games to date.

The first *Rebel Assault* was a bona fide "sleeper." The game was released at a time when only a small percentage of computer owners had the hardware necessary to run it, and projected sales for the game were relatively low. It was just a simple arcade game based loosely on the plot of the original *Star Wars*. No one could have predicted *Rebel Assault* would become one of the biggest sellers of the year, shooting to the top of both Mac and PC charts with a laser blast, and ending the year rivaled only by *Doom II* and *Myst* in terms of "units moved."

Vince Lee, project leader for both *Rebel Assault* and its forthcoming sequel, explained how the success of the game took everyone by surprise.

"When I started here at Lucas, I was doing Amiga conversions of our SCUMM games, like *Indiana Jones* and *Monkey* [*Island*] *1* and *2*. But I hadn't worked on an original product until *Rebel Assault*. The game just sort of fell in my lap. It had been hinted at, but I just took my own initiative and started programming for it. And nothing was expected of the game at the time. LucasArts had never done a CD-ROM game, and CD-ROMs weren't selling that well. When it came out, *Rebel Assault* was expected to sell something like 25,000 copies. It ended up selling well over a million copies."

LucasArts unwittingly proved with the original *Rebel Assault* that computer games have become a populist medium. Typically known for its graphic adventures and complex space-battle simulators—two genres that appeal more to die-hard gamers than new computer owners—LucasArts reached a new audience with *Rebel Assault*. But the unmitigated success of the game has not caused the production team to rest on their laurels and simply rehash the original's formula. With the sequel, they have tried to create a new gaming experience, while maintaining the simple "install and play" philosophy that made the first so popular.

Though the arcade action of the original is intact, the presentation of the game has been entirely revamped, with graphics and sound that are a light-speed jump from the first. More attention has been put into the plot as well. While *Rebel Assault* simply followed the plot of the original *Star Wars* (following our hero, Rookie One, from his training days to the destruction of the Death Star), the new game has an original story. And the animated graphics of the original have been replaced by LucasArts' first foray into the world of full-motion video, combining live actors with computer-generated backgrounds without resorting to the trappings of the "interactive movie" genre.

While it would have been easy to simply take more famous plot elements from the *Star Wars* series to give *Rebel Assault II* a similar structure to its predecessor, project leader Vince Lee decided, instead, to give the game an original story. The new plot gives the game a much more cohesive feel than its predecessor, which simply threw Rookie One into a series of very diverse battles, culminating with the famous final battle of the film. In *Rebel II*, each chapter has Rookie One unveiling more information about the sinister plot by the Empire to destroy the Rebellion, and uses a variety of game styles throughout.

As *Rebel II* begins, Rookie One is on patrol in a mysterious area known as the Dreighton Nebula—which Lee based on the Bermuda Triangle—where Rebel ships have begun vanishing.

Empire's presence in the Nebula is strange enough, but what you'll discover after being shot down will not only solve the recent disappearances in the Nebula, but reveal yet another sinister plot by the Empire to destroy the Rebel Alliance.

It seems Darth Vader has managed to get his hands on a powerful new weapon, which he has been testing from an Imperial base located in the Dreighton Nebula. You'll discover a large Imperial presence as you continue to investigate the distress call that drew you here, and you must infiltrate the stronghold and use the ship in question as a means of escape. As it turns out, this ship is the one and only Millennium Falcon, and marks the first time in a LucasArts game that players will actually be able to pilot the famous ship.

And that's just the beginning of the 15 levels that make up *Rebel Assault II*. After bringing the information to your commanders, you'll be sent on a variety of missions, gathering information about the weapon, searching for the secret Imperial base and ultimately putting an end to the Empire's plans. These missions use a variety of game play styles, including some that were not seen in the first *Rebel Assault*.

One of the major components of *Rebel Assault*'s popularity was the ease of game play. There were no bulky manuals to read and no complex keyboard commands. Instead, *Rebel Assault* gave gamers a purely action-oriented experience. This is primarily due to Lee, who explained how his fondness for arcade-type games influenced

We expected *Rebel Assault* to sell maybe 25,000 copies. It ended up selling well over a million.

—Vince Lee, Project Leader

The area is a legendary enigma, with ships throughout history disappearing without a trace in the vicinity. The legends go back as far as the Clone Wars (the historic era when the Empire came to power), when two large fleets completely vanished while battling in the Dreighton Nebula.

While on patrol, you (as Rookie One) and your wing man get a distress call from a Rebel ship from within the Nebula. Responding, you'll encounter opposition from Imperial forces, and the battle ends with you being shot down and landing on a nearby planet's surface. The

Rebel Assault's game play. "The type of games I like are *Rebel Assault*-type games, where you can just pick up the joystick and start playing. I'm a big fan of stand-up arcade games because it's that type of game play."

Rebel Assault II will continue that tradition, combining a variety of different action genres and allowing players to use a variety of different vehicles from the *Star Wars* universe, including the speeder bikes from *Jedi* and the aforementioned *Millennium Falcon*. The space combat levels—which made up the bulk of the first game—are plentiful, as are ground combat levels, in which you must blast your way through the corridors of Imperial structures. The latter, however, come in two basic guises and dispense with the overhead perspective of the original game.

In one style of ground combat level, you must hide behind obstacles, carefully timing your movements to avoid the heavy fire of nearby Stormtroopers. These levels are done with an interesting third-person perspective, which allows you to see your targets before you move into firing position. In other ground combat levels, you have managed to procure a Stormtrooper costume and you must wander through the hallways, *Doom*-style. These levels allow you to see the world through the Stormtrooper heat-sensing helmet, which shows colder areas in shades of green and warmer objects (such as advancing Stormtroopers) in red, giving the game a very unique look and adding a touch of suspense with the eerie hues.

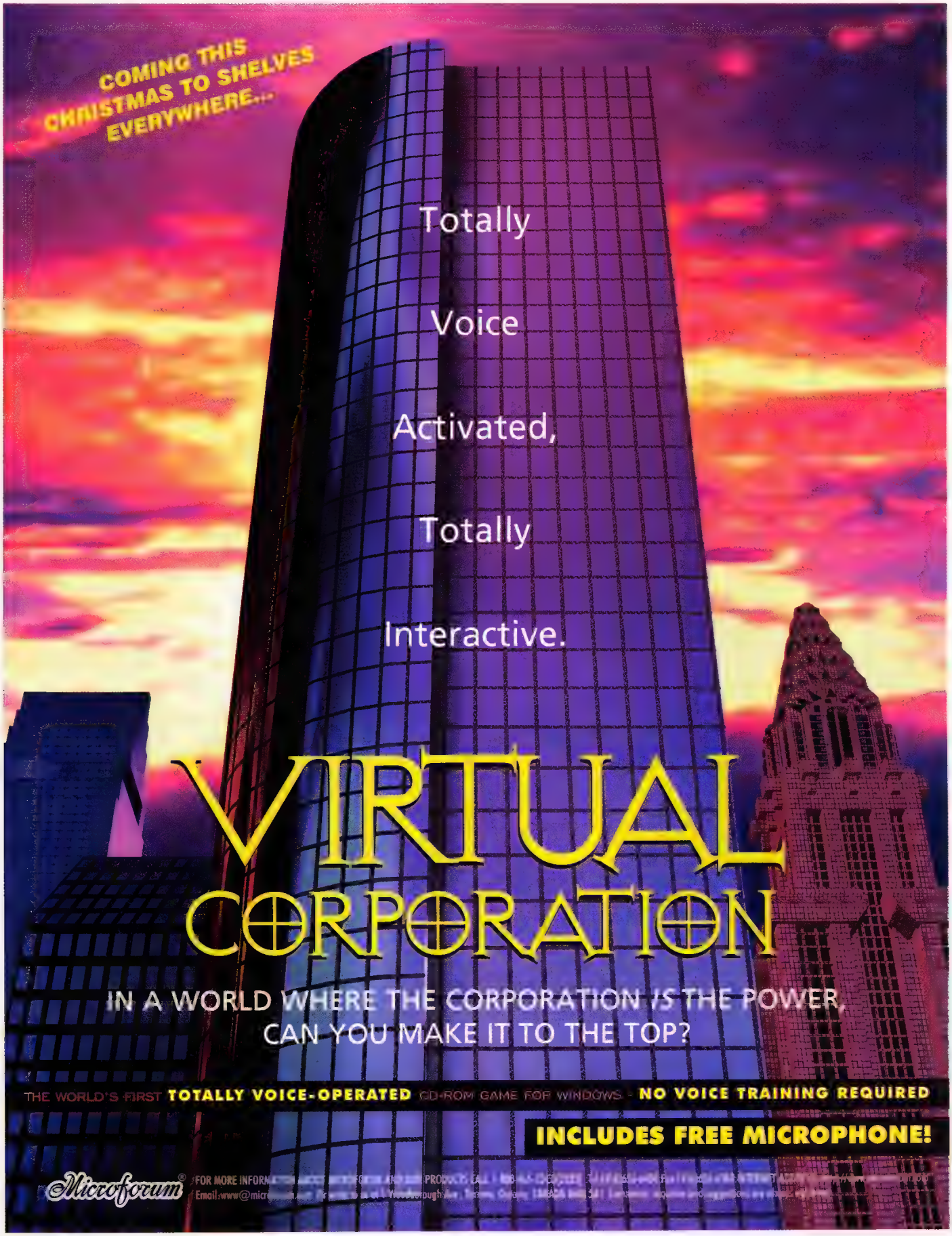
Also new in the game is an on-line difficulty editor. In addition to the three preset difficulty levels, the game will allow you to customize every aspect—making the game as simple or as difficult as you like.

But, while the game play may be essentially the same as in *Rebel I*, *Rebel Assault II* is vastly different in many respects. This difference is almost entirely due to the new look of the game, which combines live action video with computer generated scenery. Vince Lee explained how the decision came about to use video instead of more traditional animation.

"There was some question as to whether or not we would be able to do video. LucasArts has never really used video in a game before. George Lucas has always held video as the domain of Lucasfilm. But the games industry is changing, and some people are starting to expect video in products. I think he understands that, and he just wanted to make sure we could do it correctly and do it right. And after the success of *Rebel I*, where we used a little bit of video for one of the scenes, I think he was pleased with the results and wanted us to follow through when developing *Rebel II*."

Fortunately, *Rebel Assault II* should be able to avoid the stigma that full-motion video games have earned in the last few years. Known mostly for poor production quality and limited game play, "interactive movies" have primarily used video as an end instead of a means. Mark Christiansen, who did the effects compositing for *Rebel II*, sees the combination of films and games to be in its fledgling stages. "I like to think of it along the lines of early films or early television," says Christiansen. "It starts out pretty disreputable and a lot of the stuff is shoddy, and people think it's good just because they're so amazed: 'Look! There's my cat up on the screen!' or whatever. But then that period wears off and things, hopefully, improve. No one can say for sure how actors will be used in games; we're kind of learning as we go."

The *Rebel II* team avoided these pitfalls by utilizing experienced filmmakers and making sure the cinematic sequences were adding something to the game besides hype. Hal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"We can say for sure how actors will be used in games when we're all kind of learning as we go."

—Jane Jensen, Sierra

Barwood directed Lee's script for *Rebel II*, and is one of the few people in the industry to have worked extensively in both gaming and filmmaking. Now a project leader and game developer, Barwood came to LucasArts after 20 years of experience in Hollywood, where he was a producer and screenwriter on films such as *Sugarland Express* and Disney's *Dragonslayer*.

The production team made every effort to ensure the quality of the video footage, but Lee wanted to make sure his game wasn't seen as just another "interactive movie": "I have very strong opinions about the use of video in games. I don't think video makes the game. I use video relatively sparingly in *Rebel II* and only then as a replacement for animation. Just because I have video instead of animation doesn't mean I suddenly have hundreds of hours of people sitting and talking to each other back and forth and back and forth like other games do. I think a lot of people in the games industry today secretly want to make movies, so they'll put in dramatic sequences that really end up being melodramatic. I don't want to make a movie. Someone holding a joystick doesn't want to sit there and watch other people talking and interacting—*they* want to interact."

The actors were filmed against blue screens, with rough versions of the computer-generated backgrounds on monitors for positioning. The finished video was then composited with the

completed backgrounds, and the results are nothing less than seamless. Christiansen described the difficult process of successfully combining the video with the scenery. "It's a lot of work, which, to be honest, there's not an automated way of doing," he says. "Most of the process is just wrestling with the stuff. The software we have to do it with is pretty well designed, but it is a much harder process right now than it could be. It's just going to get easier and we're going to be able to get much more sophisticated with what we're doing." Despite the difficulty, the end result is breathtaking. Both the interior and exterior designs are painstakingly realistic and feature some scenery even more fantastic than was seen in the original films.

All these detailed backgrounds were designed by Rich Green, who described the process of creating the visuals for Lee's story:

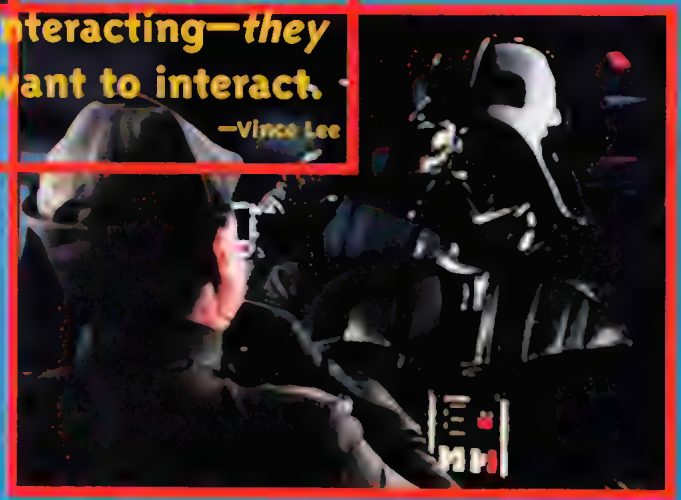
"Vince would just say things like, 'They're on a planet.' He didn't really define what the planets were—whether it was a swamp planet or a desert planet—because it wasn't really integral to the story. So I had a lot of leeway to change those things around. With the first game, we couldn't do that; you know, the trenches and so forth tended to look alike, and you didn't really get a sense of going from one planet to another. That's one thing that I hope we've done a lot better with this game, that, when you go to a planet's surface, you get a feel for that entire planet and you feel like you're there."

Green did not have complete freedom, however, as he was working within the well-established *Star Wars* universe. Green, who also created the 3-D models for *Full Throttle*, described how the design process differs when working with a well-known world: "One of the hardest things about being creative is when you're not given any limitations. You have to basically set up your own limitations and work within them. The limitations are pretty broad in the *Star Wars* universe, but there are a few constants. The Rebels are poor, they scrounge things together, their spaceships are old and beaten up. The Empire is rich, and everything is clean and new and very industrial. You stick within those conventions, but there is still a lot of freedom to create entirely new environments that haven't been seen in the films."

All of the elements combined—the new story, the new visuals and a stereo soundtrack sampled straight from the original John Williams scores—should make *Rebel Assault II* an even more engrossing experience than the original, as well as a welcome addition to the ever-expanding *Star Wars* universe.

"Someone holding a joystick doesn't want to sit there and watch other people talking and interacting—*they* want to interact."

—Vince Lee



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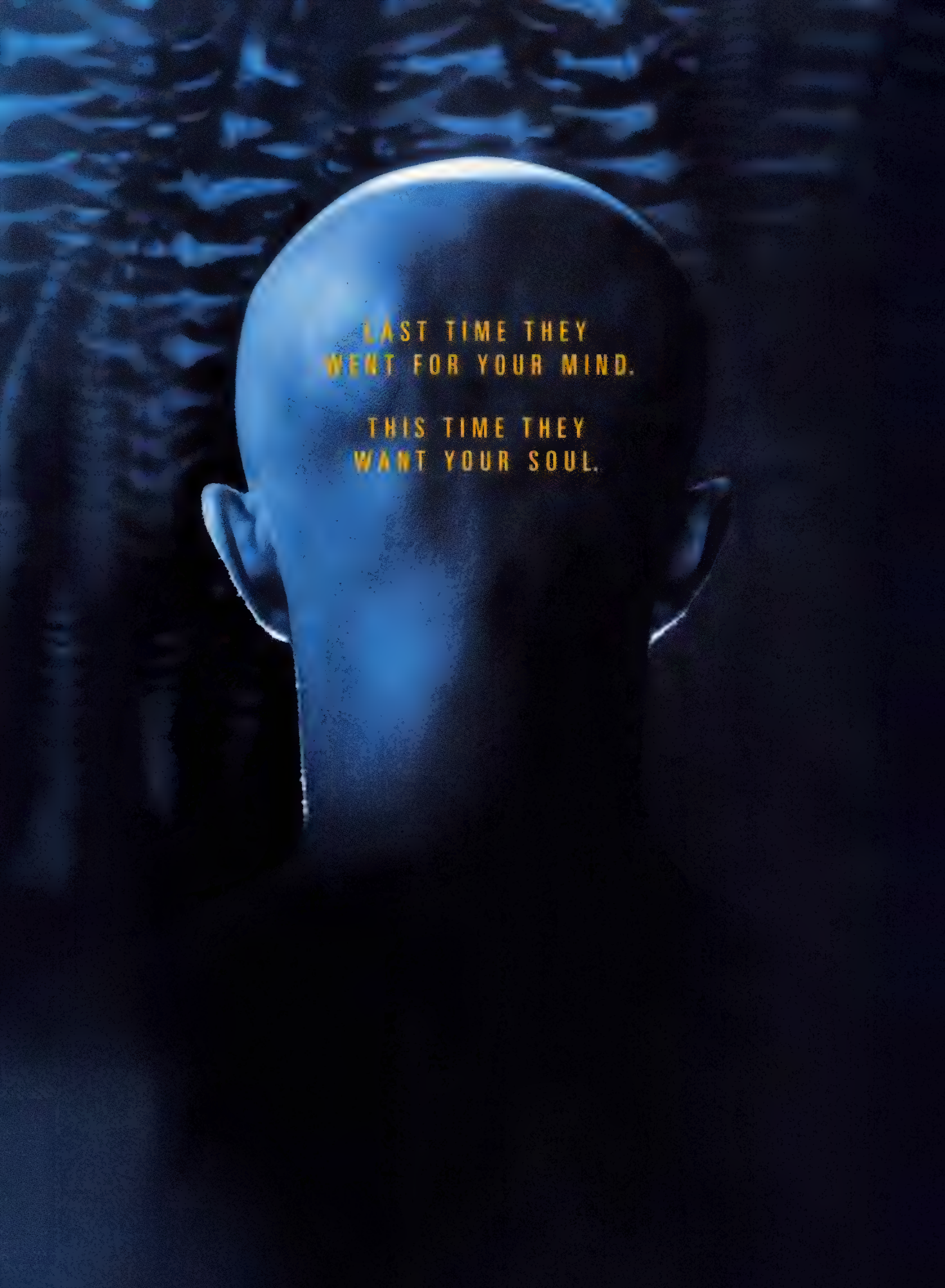
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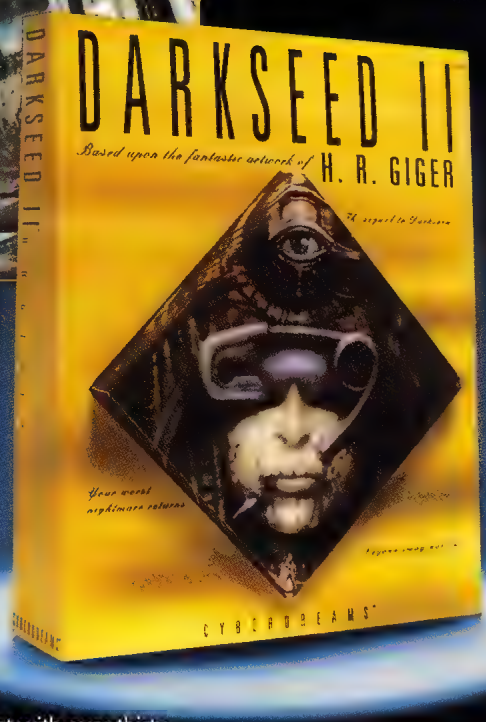

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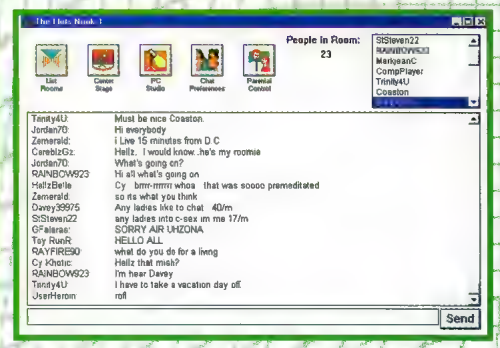
over the line

by Zach Meston

After more than six months of combing through Usenet to lovingly assemble this column, I'm still surprised by how utterly stupid so many of the messages are. That's why, when I noticed Usenetters putting down America Online users almost as much as universally hated Prodigy users, I knew it was time to investigate and see if there was a gold mine of silly messages for me to exploit for the sole purpose of providing a few cheap laughs to COMPUTER PLAYER's beloved readers. (Who says I don't have my priorities straight?)

Before charging headlong into the game messages, I took a quick detour to the People Connection section of AOL in the hopes of scoring some cyber-nookie. This resulted in my requesting—and receiving—an X-rated phone call from a 43-year-old woman with a voice like Demi Moore and—more than likely—a body like a sumo wrestler. (Hey, I just realized—why the hell am I *telling* you about this?!)



Blackthorne Snipers

Still recovering from the demented thrill of having talked dirty to a complete stranger, I made my way into AOL's message boards. It didn't take long for me to find out that those Usenetters had a point. Take this post from Martin Cox about the Interplay action/adventure game *Blackthorne*:

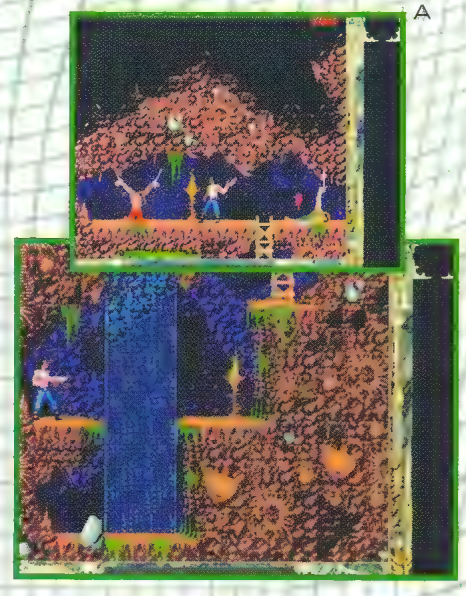
I've only played the three-level demo, but it's MUCH better than Prince of Persia 2. No wimpy sword, instead you have a Doomer's best friend—the shotgun. I love toasting all the innocents and watching them as blood splatters on the wall behind them >:->

A smiley face seems less appropriate here than, say, a paragraph-long disclaimer explaining that Martin is not a psychotic freak who's played *Mortal Kombat* one too many times. But, instead of a message suggesting to Martin that he has a great future in the postal industry, he gets an even more twisted reply from Draculos (who's one of those users too hip or too busy to bother with uppercase letters):

think the shotgun is good? wait till you get a semiautomatic, and then a fully automatic. here are some cool hints: first, the best way to kill a prisoner is with a firebomb, they don't look too happy chained to the wall do they? they ask you to free them. so I say okay, and toss a firebomb their way it burns away their whole lower body leaving a bloody torso with part of the ribs and backbone showing :)

Again with the bone-chilling smiley face. Martin follows up this reply with a two-sentence declaration that I, quite honestly, feel is grounds for instant and permanent committal:

I firebombed a prisoner. COOOOOL!!!!



MechWarrior Hardware Madness

Having no desire to read on and learn about Draculos' favorite ways to knock off little old ladies, I moved on to the messages about *MechWarrior 2*, which people were understandably raving about. I couldn't help but notice that the declaration "Go buy this game!" requires a bit of amendment in the what-the-heck's-a-standard world of PC compatibles:

[MechWarrior 2 is] DEFINITELY worth buying, if you have a

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sufficiently fast system to play the game on.

Not the catchiest sentence to slap in an advertisement, but a damn sight better than this ringing endorsement:

If you have at least a 486 DX2 with a VESA/PCI video card (should have at least one megabyte of onboard RAM) and eight megabytes of RAM on your system, you simply MUST buy this game.

Of course, not everyone was thrilled with MW2, such as "Ekmc" (nope, I don't have a clue what that stands for):

I HATED this game! Even on my Pentium 90 it was slow on SVGA and with no shading, sky, etc. I don't recommend it!

Jeff Atwood, God bless him, comes back with an intelligent post:

Wake up and smell the coffee, pal. Every single game out there is slow at 640x480 on my Pentium-120: NASCAR Racing, Descent, U.S. Navy Fighters, *you name it.*

The only game that gives even decent performance at that res is Flight Unlimited. *What we need are video cards with 3-D acceleration like the Mastrox Millennium and Windows 95 games that use the 3-D DDI so they'll be faster at higher resolutions!*

Think about it. These guys are writing games to the lowest common denominator video card in MS-DOS: simple, dumb SVGA. There are much faster cards out there, but you gotta write to the video driver...just like printer drivers work!

Design Me a Game

While you digest Jeff's comments, let's move on to what I thought would be AOL's repository of intelligence: the Game Designer's area. Alas, there seemed to be very few actual designers—just dozens of posts like this one from "BSLTQ" (damn AOL and its ten-character-max screen names!):

I HAVE AN IDEA FOR AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH AGE KIDS. SOMETHING THAT IS NOT BEING TAUGHT IN THE SCHOOLS BUT IS WHAT THEY HAVE TO DEAL WITH IN REAL LIFE. I NEED SOME INPUT AND A PROGRAMMER.

I have an idea of my own...turn off the bloody CAPS LOCK key! Yeesh. Here's another brilliant idea (actually, it's two) from Matzah Bal (such a subtly humorous name):

I have a couple game ideas for computers or home entertainment systems. One is a side-scrolling space shooter, another is a street fighting game. I would like to talk to a well-established programming company that doesn't have any problems with financial stuff, because my ideas are so big it's amazing!

I could make any number of smart-ass comments at this point, but a follow-up post from NECROCON does just as well (and spares me from having to be creative):

Wow, I've never seen those kinds of games before! (Sarcasm mode ON.)

Perhaps even more amusing than the 13-year-olds requesting multimillion-dollar game companies to call them are the 13-year-olds who post "challenges" for programmers to tackle. For example, here's a modest gauntlet thrown down by TBSMITH:

I want a program that can open any game and find the weapons, armor, items, spells, inventory, life or anything a game has to offer, and be able to change it. It would have to be able to change any game, not just a few. If by chance you can do this amazing task, E-mail me.

Okay, let's pretend you produce a program that lets you hack into any computer game and mess around with it. Do you:
A) Sell the program and make a bunch of well-deserved money?
B) Give the program to an AOL dweeb named TBSMITH?

If you answered B, you're just the kind of person AOL is looking for. Sign up today—and don't forget to drop in on the People Connection to make some new "friends" (wink wink, nudge nudge, say no more)!

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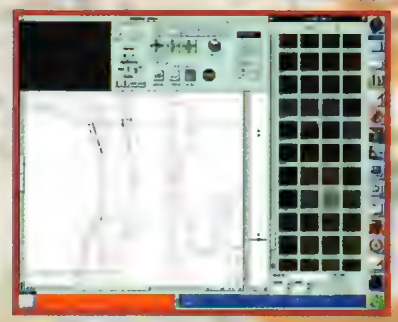
CIRCLE #113 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

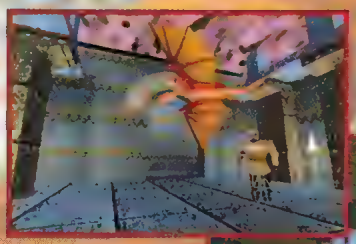
shareware spotlight

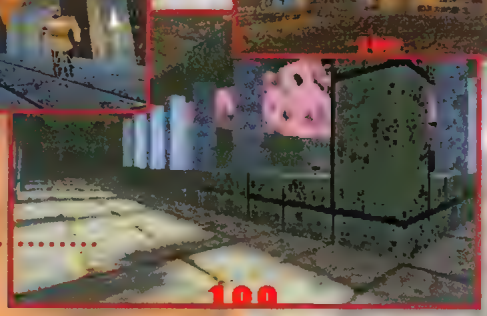
by Jeff James

shareware rumblings

The successor to the game phenomenon known as *Doom*, Id Software's *Quake* should be released within a few months. Although *Quake* is still fairly early in the development stage, some details of this sword-and-sorcery bashfest have begun to emerge. Whereas *Doom* allowed a maximum of four networked players at once, *Quake* will reportedly support as many players as your network server has clients. This emphasis on robust multiplayer support may extend to the Internet as well, with a possibility that the final version will support multiplayer games on the Internet. Judging from these early captures, the new lighting effects will add a considerable amount of depth to game play, proving Id's assertion that *Quake* will be "true 3-D." Like *Doom*, *Quake* will be released as a shareware game first, with an updated and expanded version to hit retail channels some time later. For the latest information on *Quake*, check out Id Software's World Wide Web (WWW) page at **www.idsoftware.com** or the **comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.action** Internet newsgroup.





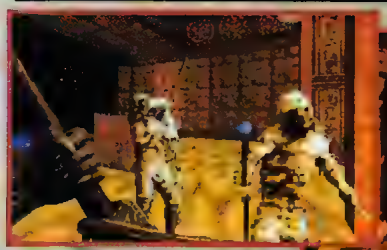


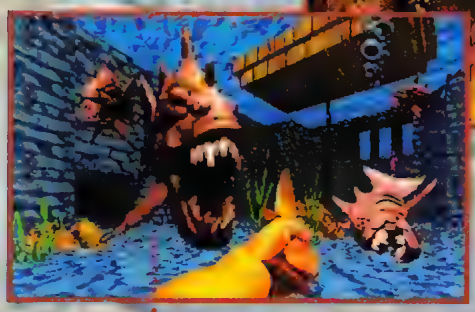
Quake

preview

Ruins: Return of the Gods
System: IBM PC
Publisher: 3D Realms Entertainment
Available: 2nd Quarter 1996

As any computer gamer can tell you, 3-D action games like *Descent*, *Doom* and *Rise of the Triad* have taken the shareware gaming world by storm. 3D Realms Entertainment has taken that philosophy to heart and is planning to produce a flood of 3-D–perspective action games. One of the most promising is *Ruins: Return of the Gods*. If you can imagine *Doom* placed in the shifting sands of Egypt, you'll have a good idea as to what *Ruins* is all about. There will be dozens of baddies to vanquish, including mummies, cat-headed monsters and followers of ancient Egyptian gods. Some of the game denizens look as if they stepped out of Ray Harryhausen's design studio, resembling the ancient beasts displayed in such movies as *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* and *Clash of the Titans*. To combat all of these critters, your square-jawed character has a boatload of weapons at his disposal, including grenades, pistols, ancient artifacts and a pair of steel-knuckled fists. The shareware version of *Ruins* should be available in the first few months of '96, with a retail version to follow. For more info on *Ruins*, check out the 3D Realms web site at **http://swcbbs.com:80/apogee/3dreallms.htm**.





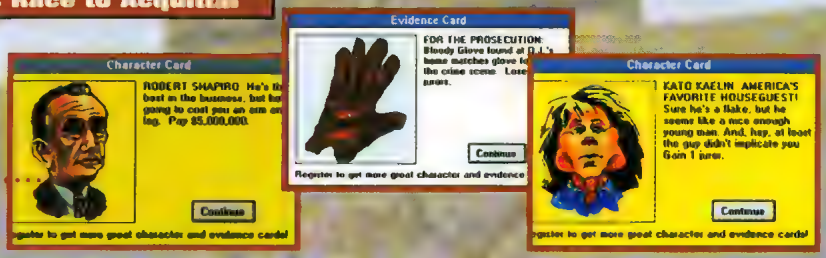
Ruins: Return of the Gods

O.J.'s Race to Acquittal
Registration Fee: $15.95
Publisher: Banana Productions
P.O. Box 13492
Overland Park, KS 66282-3492
Telephone: 913.362.0644
System: IBM PC/Windows
Overall Rating: 5

I'm not entirely sure how I feel about this game. On the one hand, *O.J.'s Race to Acquittal* is a workable Monopoly clone set in the venue of the O.J. Simpson trial. It's not a bad game, really, and the humor displayed throughout makes this an enjoyable diversion from *Doom* and *Descent*. Up to four players can play at once, racing around the game board to collect evidence, sway jurors and avoid the LAPD. You can collect "character" cards and land on trivia squares. If you land on the latter, you'll be asked a question about the trial and given a bonus for choosing the correct answer. (Yes, Nicole Brown Simpson's dog is also named Kato.) The graphics are passable, and the caricatures of Robert Shapiro, Marcia Clark and Kato Kaelin are first-rate.

On the downside, the game struck me as a bit on the morbid side. With every simulated roll of the die, I felt a sickening twinge from my conscience. Should I be enjoying a game that spoofs a murder trial? In the end, I couldn't make up my mind either way—I'd have to say I'm ambiguous on this one. It's an average game on its own merits, but, since it covers the murder trial of the decade, some people may be irresistibly drawn to it. If you're disgusted with the trial, avoid this game like the plague. But if you can't get enough of O.J., Johnny, Judge Ito and Marcia, add this one to your download list. *O.J.'s Race to Acquittal* can be found on most commercial on-line services.

O.J.'s Race to Acquittal



WinWar II v3.06
Registration Fee: $30
Publisher: Silicon Commander Games
P.O. Box A-3407
Chicago, IL 60690-3407
Telephone: N/A
System: IBM PC/Windows
Overall Rating: 7

If you've ever played Milton Bradley's classic World War II board game Axis & Allies, the question whether you'll like Silicon Commander Games' *WinWar II* will be a no-brainer. Programmed by Dion Kurczek, *WinWar II* allows you to fight World War II as one of seven world powers, including the USA, Germany, Russia, Italy, France, Japan and the United Kingdom. Moving armies, building units and waging war are all just a few mouse clicks away with the *Windows*-based game interface, which sports a fully featured on-line help system. It's not perfect, though: It seems overly difficult to divide up units, and the program runs a little slow on anything less than a 486.

Regardless, strategy and World War II buffs should find much to like about this one. You can find *WinWar II* on most on-line services, or you can snag a copy from the Silicon Commander web site at **http://www.silicmdr.com**.

WinWar II

WWI Air Fighters v1.1
Registration Fee: $15+$3 S/H
Publisher: Kamyan Software
1228 Narragansett Drive
Carol Stream, IL 60188
Telephone: 708.372.6134
System: IBM PC/Windows
Overall Rating: 6

Kamyan Software's *WWI Air Fighters* plays much like solitaire, but with a twist. Instead of playing cards, you play with a deck filled with World War I fighter planes. The cards arranged above yours are called "blocking cards," while your cards are called "strike cards." When you draw a plane from the deck, you'll see that each plane is given a numerical rating ranging from one to ten. A plane rated as a "ten" has the chance to take any card it faces, while a lower-ranking card will be hard-pressed to take any other. Planes can become "damaged," requiring you to use "repair cards" to fix the plane and finish play. Game play is simple and straightforward, although the included instructions are a bit on the meager side. If you're into card games (or if you're a World War I aviation buff), give this one a look. *WWI Air Fighters* can be found on most commercial on-line services, including America Online, GEnie and CompuServe.

WWI Air Fighters

Work in Progress

Powered Up

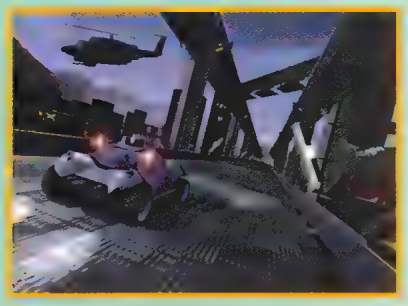
by Jeffrey Adam Young

Following the immensely successful *Cyberia*, published by Interplay, hot-shot development team Xatrix is fast at work on the game's sequel, which is scheduled for release in the November time frame. Picking up directly where the last game left off, you once again assume the role of Zak, a futuristic wonder spy who's half Rambo and half James Bond. Like the first game, *Cyberia*^{2} mixes narrative film sequences with action-packed interactive segments on foot and in the air.

Enemies in *Cyberia*² have been completely randomized so there's no repetition.

The game begins with Zak awakening from a cryogenic state after three years. Having been revived by a band of rebels hellbent on destroying the Free World Alliance(FWA), you wipe the three years of icy sleep from your groggy eyes and return to the hot seat for a thrill ride of an adventure.

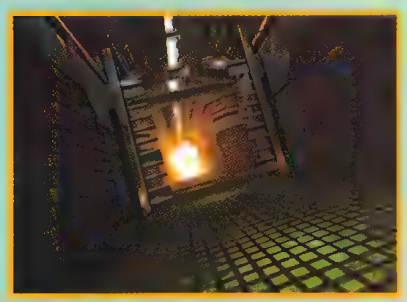
Zak's got a few unique attributes this game, the first of which *Cyberia* vets will notice is a bald head. The bare scalp look works for Jean-Luc, so why not Zak? Though those who played *Cyberia* may have a richer gaming experience, *Cyberia*² is meant to be a stand-alone game. In a flashback sequence, visions



of the first game appear to explain the plot, but you need not have played the original to understand this sequel.

Along the way, you meet up with Novelle, a beautiful young rebel who, in contrast to the first game's leading woman, plays a major role in the sequel's steamy story. Who says there aren't any good women's roles in Digiwood?

What is strikingly different from the



first game are the details. While *Cyberia*²'s futuristic flying and shooting sequences are still confined to a set path of invisible rails, all of the on-screen elements are live. These Trans-Fighter scenes enable you to move your gun sights around the screen and shoot everything in your path—vehicles will catch fire, obstacles will crumble, office windows will shatter, people will scatter.

Xatrix's chairman and chief technical officer, Drew Markham, proudly states, "We didn't rehash the first product here. We took the most popular elements and really pushed the envelope. In the Trans-Fighter sequences, everything is live, so you must be smart about what you're shooting—in one crucial point in the game, you hover above a building with the intention of landing on its roof, but if you carelessly shoot your depleted uranium slugs on your landing site, then you ruin your chances of successfully setting the craft down."

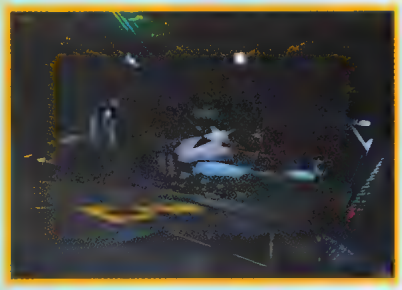
Xatrix tends to focus on making narrative an integral part of the game.

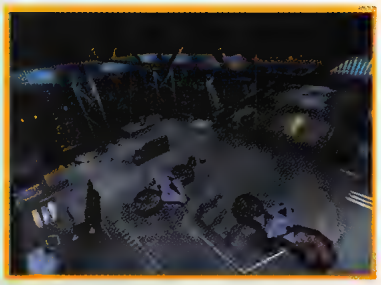
While the first game was a commercial success, it drew strong criticism from the multimedia gaming community. "Novice game players like the flight-on-rails genre of gaming; the success of *Rebel Assault* proved that," says Markham. "The genre gives the players a James Bond-style feeling of flight without being encumbered by the often-confusing controls of a traditional flight-sim game. It's a respectable genre, and one we think we can do well. Believe it or not, I know a number of seasoned gamers who were surprised to find

themselves sucked into the first game."

With the growing numbers of newly arrived computer gamers in the marketplace, keeping the controls simple seems to be a smart strategy.

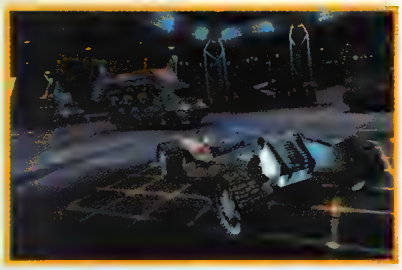
Xatrix's president and CEO, Derek McLeish, sees the marketplace filling with games like *Cyberia*, with Trimark





Interactive's *The Hive* being a good example. "*Cyberia*-like games are popular," says McLeish. "What we're trying to do with the sequel is significantly enhance the gaming experience to create a seamless action-adventure game. *Cyberia*² takes the framework of the first game and, instead of just making a few minor adjustments, we're improving it by the power of two."

In *Cyberia*², the enemies are completely randomized, so that they appear in different places each time the game is played. There's no learning a pattern and then blowing through the game based on your keen memory. Replayability, a factor not found in the first game, is alive and well in *Cyberia*².



Xatrix's Tracker technology speeds up the process of what is known in the 3-D graphics world as rendering.

The combat or corridor engine of *Cyberia*² places the trailing camera just behind Zak as he scours the halls for enemy snipers. This perspective yields a number of positive results. Having Zak positioned so close to the camera creates a visual impact, bringing the player into the game. When Zak reacts to on-screen action, you can clearly see and hear him. When things get really intense, Zak even glances over his shoulder at you, as if to say, "Did you see that?" As with the first game, once you're in a corridor, there's no stopping and starting unless you reach a junction in the path. The movements you do have at your disposal include cruising left and right, crouching, jumping and, of course, shooting. These corridor segments of the game are cut and edited like a movie. For example, as you approach a corner, the game may cut to a sequence revealing narrative information, such as an

approaching guard, then cut back to Zak and give you a chance to make a decision based on the story information. It's sort of like the old *Dragon's Lair*-style games, only with far more interaction.

"This type of interactive cinematic experience is highly rewarding," insists Markham.

Something that Xatrix tends to focus on is making the narrative an integral part of the game. With the visual expertise and programming techniques, they could have easily slapped any made-to-order story on top of the action sequences, but, as McLeish notes, "In *Cyberia*^{2}, you can't get a third of the way through the game without making decisions based on the storyline." In one instance, you must retrieve a valuable article from within a fishtank, but, if you blast away the tank, the item is disintegrated. If you play the game in this careless manner, you will quickly kill off your main character, bringing the entire game to a grinding halt.

Beyond the action-oriented segments that dominate the game, there are also puzzles to figure out. For instance, in order to infiltrate a particular building, you must avoid all of the sensors that detect both your guns and your clothing. Unconventionally, your main character must shed all of his clothing and weapons before entering the compound. As you guide Zak through the pathways, you can actually make him jump up to the point where you can get a glance at his backside. Perhaps Xatrix is trying to capture the women's gaming market?

At first glance, both *Cyberia* and *Cyberia*^{2} sport remarkable graphics for computer games, even by today's standards. What makes these striking visuals possible is some hefty hardware and a proprietary software technology that Xatrix calls Tracker. Equipped with Silicon Graphics' Onyx workstations with a CPU 200 MHz chip and a Reality Engine operating system that cranks out up to a half-million polygons on-screen at one time, Xatrix's artists create landscapes and 3-D modeled objects and virtual actors. The fluid movements of the actors are captured using motion-capture technology that involves a person wearing a number of velcro-attached sensors and having the computer track the movements.

While motion-capture technology speeds up the process of re-creating realistic movement, Xatrix's Tracker technology speeds up the process of what is known in the 3-D graphics world as rendering—the ability to create realistic 3-D walk-throughs from a particular vantage point. While most game creators are content to create a 3-D space on the computer and leave the machine overnight to render a specified path through the space, Tracker enables its users to render a path in real time by simply moving freely through the space on three planes. This gives the visual creators of a game the freedom to view the action of a particular scene from multiple vantage points, choosing the best one and fine-tuning the camera angles and lighting on the fly. With this single tool, the gap between what a filmmaker does and the work a game creator does is finally being bridged.

Set for release on November 15, *Cyberia*^{2} will be *Windows 95*-compliant on two discs.

When asked whether this type of freedom of movement through 3-D space will ever be available to computer-game players, Markham responds optimistically. "We're not as far away from that as you might think," he says. "Next year, video-accelerator cards marketed directly to game players will be released. This will free up the computer's main processor, providing a pipeline of graphics straight from the accelerator board. With this type of technology, a standard 486, 66 MHz will be able to quantumly outperform a Pentium 120 in displaying high-resolution, 16-bit, color, texture-mapped 3-D graphics."

At the current time, games like *Doom* and *Terminal Velocity* do real-time 3-D rendering, but the quality of the graphics is so far removed from what people have come to expect from other mediums, like television, that Xatrix has opted not to include real-time 3-D in its games until the horsepower and image quality improve. According to Markham, that's right around the corner. When that new era arrives, Xatrix will split its development into two types of products—highly interactive 3-D games to be played with the newly announced accelerator boards and cinematic graphic adventures focusing on storylines.

Set for release on November 15, *Cyberia*^{2} will be *Windows 95*-compliant on two discs. Plans for a version to appear on the Sony PlayStation and the Saturn are next, and, eventually, a Mac version of the game will surface. Unusually, this game will have its eye on the world market, with German-, French-, Spanish- and Japanese-language versions to be available soon after the English version's release.

Xatrix was hesitant to tell us more finite details about its next games, but a wild ride in a motion simulator housed in the corner of its development studios may offer a clue. Also, there were talks about creating an entirely computer-animated weekly television show lingering through Xatrix's halls. From what we saw, the Tracker engine would be perfect for providing an endless supply of high-quality graphics without the waiting time usually associated with these types of visuals.

Whether it be location-based games, noninteractive television shows or interactive computer-game action-adventures, Xatrix seems destined for greatness on each of these horizons. A far cry from the pen-and-paper RPG ancestors of computer games, this company's fare is targeted at the growing numbers of nontechnical people who see computer entertainment as just another forum for having a bit of fun.

If Xatrix finds its market, it could very well have the best-selling game of the year. If not, this savvy company seems to diversified enough to weather a shakeout in any of the industries it is exploring.

The Xatrix team.

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"Oh, you're so clever."

"Wow. It looks so real."

"You're so photogenic."

"Chartreuse is your color."

"Honestly, I never noticed."

"You don't look a day over 25."

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point of reference

by Mikki Halpin

reference\ ref-ern(t)s, ref-(e-)ren(t)s\ *n* **1:** the act of referring or consulting **2:** a bearing on a matter **3:** something that refers a reader or [illegible] to another source of information ◆ this section of COMPUTER PLAYER

Getting Wired

Science titles are a challenge. They need to explain abstract concepts like gravity or velocity and demonstrate how these things affect and operate in everyday life. Savvy publishers are bridging this gap in their education titles by including hands-on activities for users, such as flying a kite, which illustrate the ideas within the program itself. *CyberCrafts: Fun With Electronics* takes it all to a new level. The CD comes with an "electronic workbench," a little kit complete with transducers, transistors, diodes, a transformer and a photocell. The only thing not included is, of course, a battery (9 volt).

After a somewhat tedious setup process, which the ROM will guide you through, you are ready to explore the CD and play electrician! (Wearing a big tool belt and low-hanging your pants is optional.) Each of the program's four sections can play through as you watch, or can be stepped though frame-by-frame. In a brightly animated environment, the various electrical components explain themselves to you in a manner reminiscent of the dancing popcorn boxes and soda pops you saw at the drive-in. Though the dialogue occasionally descends into annoying faux-hip humor, it is accessible and hits all the salient technical points. There's the testosterone-driven Battery, the seductive Capacitors ("a place to store your juice"), the rappin' Transistor Sisters, the butch Diode, the Valley girl Photo Cell and the eerily Joe Camel-like Earphone. Hey, a little sexual innuendo never hurt anybody, right? This section concludes with a quiz to make sure you have absorbed the key information.

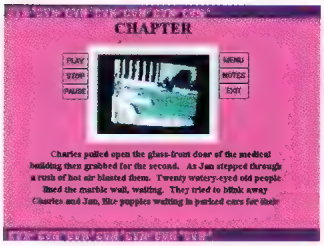
The Basics section gives the conceptual underpinnings to the rest of the piece. You learn that electricity is not man-made but that it is naturally present in our world. You see how the protons and neutrons "hang out" in the nucleus of an atom until they are "pushed" elsewhere in what we call an "electrical charge." These passages are all clearly illustrated and then reiterated in terms of the workbench and the projects included elsewhere in the ROM. Here, you also learn how to create "schematics," the diagrammatic language of electricity, which will also help in the experimental section.

So how about the experimental section? I will leave it to you, dear readers, to imagine the *fun* of making a burglar alarm, a voice-activated light bulb or an intercom, not to mention the electric candles, strength detectors and the age-old crystal radio. The projects are sorted by level of difficulty. The program leads you through each one step-by-step, with easy-to-read diagrams of how your workbench should look at each point. If you successfully complete an experiment, you are rewarded with a little animation or funky old-movie clip. Additionally, each project concludes with a reiteration of *why* it works and how the project relates to the conceptual science of the rest of the program.

Finally, in the Behind the Scenes section, brief explanations of the science of everyday life again relate the theories to reality. You can learn how a bar code scanner works, a vending machine, a telephone and sundry other modern conveniences. Forget those dorky math programs collecting dust on your children's shelves. *Fun With Electronics* is a benchmark for educational products (and parents will probably want a spare for themselves).

For more information, contact: Philips Media Home and Family Entertainment, 10960 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA, 90024; 310.444.6600.

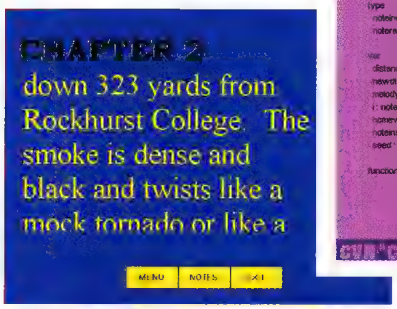
CyberNovella

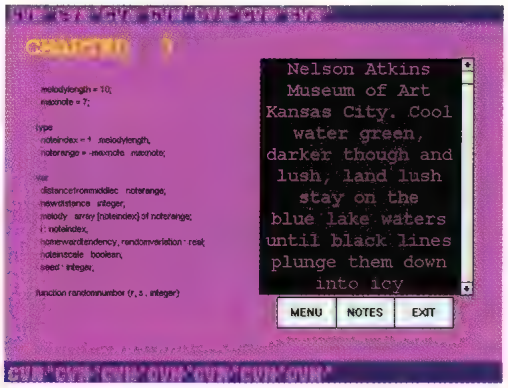

CHAPTER
PLAY
STOP
PAUSE
MENU
NOTES
EXIT
Charles pulled open the glass-front door of the medical building then grabbed for the second. As Jan stepped through a rush of hot air blasted them. Twenty watery-eyed old people lined the marble wall, waiting. They tried to blink away Charles and Jan, like puppies waiting in parked cars for their

Negative Space is a multimedia literary project by Holly Franking. Though the story unfolds in numbered chapters, which you select from a menu, once you are within the narrative space, it is a challenge to sort out what is happening. Various streams of text flow by, as voice-over and occasional animation wander into the frame. Some chapters are video-based, but always the elements are in process, bouncing off one another as you wander. In one scene, video of a national monument, voice-over about *The Ancient Mariner* and instructions for getting a printer on-line cohabitate with text about the novel's main characters, Charles and Jennifer.

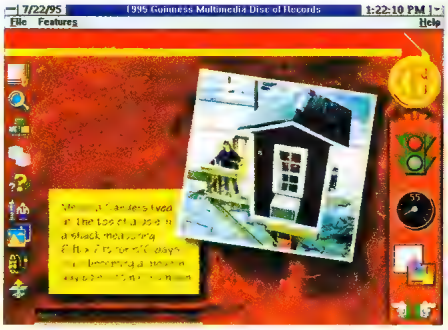
Though at times overly precious and academic (frequent references to Mikhail Bakhtin and Jacques Derrida firmly date the piece in mid-'80s academia), *Negative Space* is also a social commentary on the way we create, with references both to new, nonsexual means of reproduction and the way that meaning is created in the flow of language in conversation. In Franking's intentionally perforated style, the text is merely a contour, tracing the outline of an episode that you must guess at: "He yelled. She cried." This piece will prove rewarding for those who stick with it, but it's everything the philistines mean when they say, "You call *that* art?"

For more information, contact: DiskoTek, P.O. Box 495151, Garland, TX 75049; 214.458.4458.

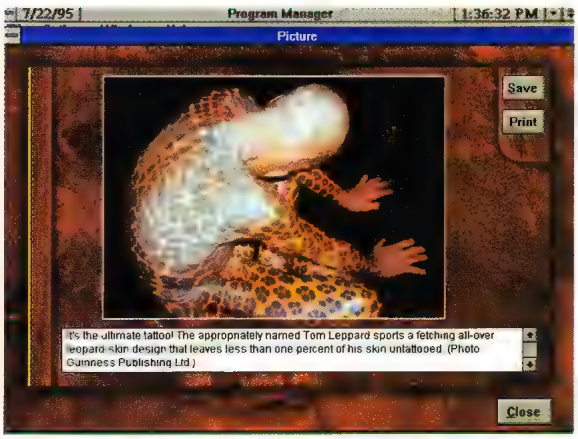

CHAPTER 2
down 323 yards from Rockhurst College. The smoke is dense and black and twists like a mock tornado or like a
MENU
NOTES
EXIT


Nelson Atkins Museum of Art Kansas City. Cool water green, darker though and lush, land lush stay on the blue lake waters until black lines plunge them down into icy
MENU
NOTES
EXIT

Guinness: Not the Beer



Remember the childish delights of paging through the *Guinness Book of World Records*? More salacious than *National Geographic* even, those crappy black-and-white reproductions of Siamese twins and the "World's Longest Fingernails" were an endless source of gross out and wonder. Unfortunately, most of the good stuff seems to have been edited out of the *1995 Guinness Multimedia Disc of Records*. Oh, sure, there's a picture of a 350-pound tumor, and some guy with a mustache a mile long, but nothing that's gonna keep you up at night wondering if it might happen to you. After you sit through a Monty Python-like animated opener (which will loop endlessly until you figure out how to continue), the main menu screen provides you with several categories (Superlatives, The Movies) and several types of search modes (by media, topic, word, etc.).

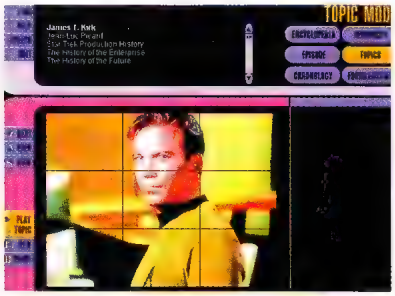

7/22/95
Program Manager
1:36:32 PM
Picture
Save
Print
It's the ultimate tattoo! The appropriately named Tom Leppard sports a fetching all-over leopard-skin design that leaves less than one percent of his skin untattooed. (Photo Guinness Publishing Ltd.)
Close

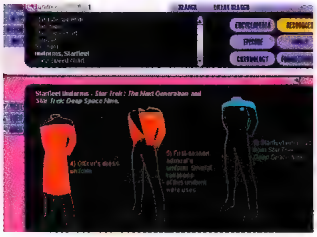
Each choice you make closes the window you were in and opens a new one, an unnecessary and distracting flaw, er, I mean *feature*, that seems to ignore some of the basic properties of *Windows*. You can't save the results of a search and you can't have several records open at once, so, if you wanted to set up the world's shortest man on a blind date with the world's shortest woman, you couldn't get a preview of the happy couple. There are also several annoying misspellings and grammar mistakes, resulting in an overall program that's slapdash and haphazard. Buy the book.

For more information, contact: Grolier Electronic Publishing, Sherman Turnpike, Danbury, CT 06816.

point of reference

Help Me, Spock





I read the other day that something like 89% of the American population can't name the president of Mexico. But I bet almost *all* of them know what a Klingon is. Trekism has long ago gone from being a subculture to being an element of society almost on a level with *Dianetics*, populating bookstore shelves, usenet newsgroups and television prime time with depth and persistence. And that's why the *Star Trek Omnipedia* is so important. Just imagine the faux pas at your next cocktail party if you forget about that episode with the alternate universe! Remember that one?

The *Star Trek Omnipedia* is brought to you by the same folks who did the *Star Trek Technical Manual*, with both the interface and Majel Barret reprising their roles. One groovy thing about this piece is that there is a voice-activated mode (you must have a microphone in your computer), so you can feel just like James Tiberius Kirk, shouting, "Computer! Display Photo!" However, even in good old, retro mouse-activated mode, the *Omnipedia* is still really cool. It has information relating to *Star Trek*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, *Star Trek: Voyager* and even all the *Star Trek* movies. We're talking the comprehensive geekfest of the year, folks.

There are tons of archival entries, including cross-referenced cast lists, storylines and star dates for all shows. The chronology is meticulous and includes the various time travels that have occurred in some of the storylines. There's even an index of Captain Kirk's romantic exploits, including his fling with "Ruth" while on shore leave at the Academy, before he joined Star Fleet! Every entry in the encyclopedia is annotated with hyperlinks to other information and multimedia elements.

The topical section is the most fascinating, with comparative charts of all of the life-forms that have appeared in the *Trek* shows, a uniform fashion show, exemplars of the various weapons and highlights of famous *Trek* battles, which you can see from the *Enterprise* or alien point of view. There is an amazing documentation of "future history," which explains the origins of the Federation and its Star Fleet (in the wake of the Eugenics War and World War III), the meaning of the Prime Directive and even a nod to Zefram Cochrane, the inventor of the warp drive, which revolutionized intergalactic travel, through to "present day" conflicts such as the Maqui situation.

For me, *Star Trek*'s charm is epitomized in that cheesy opening which we can all still recite as readily as the Pledge of Allegiance: "To boldly go...". The *Omnipedia* takes the *Trek* experience to the level of obsession, if not fanaticism, and, while future anthropologists may debate the merits of that mission, for now it's great fun.

For more information, contact: Simon and Schuster Interactive, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020; 800.983.5333.

Salt of the Earth

Certain films go beyond suspending reality for a few hours to travel into the social fabric, becoming not only documents of the events they portray, but also important artifacts of our own history. *Salt of the Earth* is a documentary CD-ROM about a documentary film, and the two narratives twist and turn together in a weave that incorporates threads of race, gender and political oppression.

The original *Salt of the Earth*, the film, is a documentary about a strike at a silver mine in New Mexico in 1950. The Mexican miners, living without running water and accruing incredible debts to the company store, went on strike for more sanitary housing and better safety conditions in the mines (the white workers had running water, etc.). The mine owners, in cahoots with the local sheriffs, retaliated with a court order ending the strike. The miners were barred from picketing. But the miners' wives took over, in a protest that provoked jail time and even a few gun battles. The film centers on the relationship between Ramon, a mine worker, and his wife, Esperanza, who led the women in revolt, a revolt that their husbands, used to the women's subservient role, were not entirely comfortable with.

The film *Salt of the Earth* has its own story of repression. Created during the McCarthy era by a group of Hollywood's blacklisted filmmakers, *Salt of the Earth* turns in on itself to show how history is controlled by those in power. The lead actress in the film was deported, labs were threatened with prosecution if they processed the film and theaters refused to show it when it was finished. Paul Jerrico, the producer of the film, tells a chilling story of Hollywood's backroom deals with the most reprehensible elements of our government.

Salt of the Earth, the CD-ROM, was clearly a labor of love for its producer Aleen Stein. The entire film is here, along with a short documentary about the blacklist days (*The Hollywood Ten*), the original screenplay in several languages, production stills, critical essays, contextual information and lengthy biographies of all the players. Its stark, somber interface and subject matter are an admirable corrective to the rosy-toned images we are fed of the 1950s.

For more information, contact: Voyager, 1 Bridge St., Irvington, NY 10533-9919; 914.591.5500.

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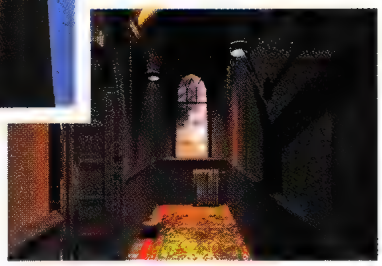
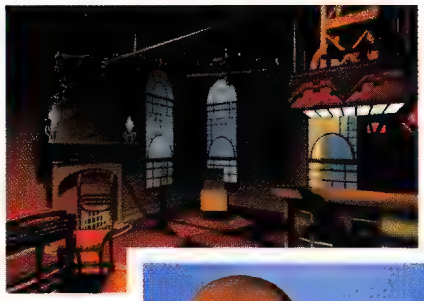
XACP5B

by Mike Davila and Ron Dulin

Ripper





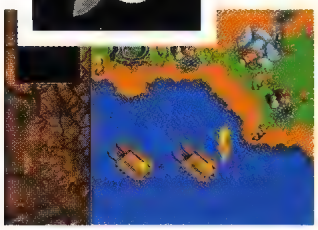
Adding to the Jack the Ripper mythos is *Ripper* from Take 2 Interactive, the folks who brought you *Star Crusader*, *Hell* and *Bureau 13*. A futuristic detective story, *Ripper* takes place in New York in the year 2040, where a serial killer has been terrorizing citizens and baffling police.

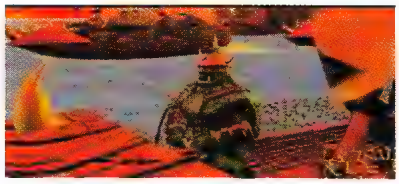
As Detective Jake Quinlan (any relation to Hank Quinlan from *Touch of Evil*?), you must find the killer before he strikes again. The big problem with your task is that the killer seemingly vanishes after he eviscerates his victims, and you are next on his hit list. One of the most exciting features of *Ripper* is that the game will have four distinct endings with four different culprits, a device that should work much better here than it did in the movie *Clue*.

System: IBM PC CD
Publisher: Take 2 Interactive
Developer: Take 2 Interactive
Available: Winter '95

Ripper features a new look for Take 2, with 3-D environments using a first-person perspective à la *Myst*. It also marks Take 2's first foray into the world of FMV and features two hours of full-screen video starring one of the most bizarre casts ever assembled: Christopher Walken, Burgess Meredith, John Rhys-Davies, Tahnee Welch and Jimmie Walker head up the $4-million production, and Blue Oyster Cult provides the soundtrack, including the rock classic "Don't Fear the Reaper" (which—if you sing like Speedy Gonzales—sounds frighteningly like "Don't Fear the Ripper").

Warcraft II



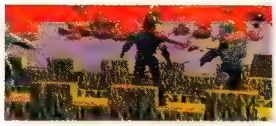


This highly anticipated sequel to *Warcraft: Orcs and Humans* promises to surpass its predecessor in both complexity and addictiveness. With plenty of new options, *Warcraft II* should maintain the overall feel of the original while improving on the formula in almost every respect.

Once again, the Humans and the Orcs are battling for control of the land. You can choose which side you wish to command, and you are responsible for building settlements and driving your opponents from the region. You'll have to gather resources, which now include oil and ore in addition to the gold and lumber from the original.

Warcraft II also adds plenty of new structures and vehicles to your arsenal of options. You'll be able to build seagoing vessels such as oil tankers and battleships and take to the skies with various flying crafts.

One of the most promising aspects of *Warcraft II* is the advanced AI, which should alleviate one of the major problems of the original. No longer will the computer opponent make the same mistakes over and over again, such as continually sending only a few soldiers into a horde of your archers. Combine this new AI with the beautiful Super VGA graphics and plenty of the humor that made the original so much fun ("Why do you keep touching me?"), and *Warcraft II* should definitely be a winner. Watch for our feature story on *Warcraft II* next issue.



System: IBM PC CD
Publisher: Davidson & Associates
Developer: Blizzard
Available: Winter '95

The Darkening

The second of Origin's big-budget interactive movies is *The Darkening*, a futuristic tale of amnesia and intrigue that uses an enhanced *Wing Commander III* engine. *The Darkening*, like *WCIII*, features a cast chock-full of big names and recognizable faces. British television star Clive Owens plays the protagonist, Lev Arris, who awakens from a cryogenic sleep to find that he has no memory of who he is or what he was doing in cold storage. Controlling Lev, you will encounter all sorts of seedy characters, played by an international all-star cast featuring Christopher Walken (*The Deer Hunter, Pulp Fiction*), John Hurt (*The Elephant Man, Rob Roy*) and Jurgen Prochnow (*Das Boot, Body of Evidence*), as well as David Warner, David McCallum and Mathilda May.

Instead of the computer-generated backgrounds used in *WCIII, The Darkening* uses real sets that are just incredible. Each of the planets you will visit has a unique look, as do the inhabitants. There are eight planets in all, each with its own intriguing history. Anhur is the starting place for most of the civilization in the system. An ongoing war between the "humanists" and the "techies" has caused many factions to flee and search for new planets to settle. Bex is one of these settlements, founded by humanists who live a simple lifestyle that shuns technology.

On the other end of the spectrum is Hephaestus, a highly technological planet whose ecosystem has been all but ruined by pollution. Crius is a planet renowned for its medical research. When first settled, the colonists were stricken by a mysterious disease. The search for a cure led to vast improvements in medical knowledge and technology, making Crius one of the wealthier planets you will visit. These are just a few of the diverse locations you will have to travel to as Arris, and you will have to track down key characters on these planets as well as trade goods to maintain your search for your identity.

System:
IBM PC CD
Publisher:
Electronic Arts
Developer:
Origin Systems
Available:
Winter '95

The game follows a similar format to *WCIII*, combining interactive film sequences (shot in 16mm at the famous Pinewood Studios outside of London) with the incredible space combat engine.

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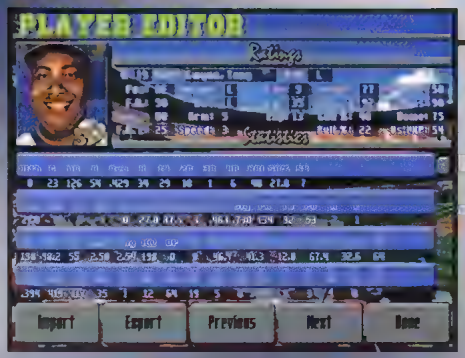

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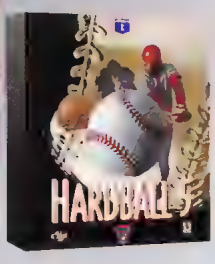

See for yourself!
For demo:
http://www.MindSpan.com/MindSpan/hb5.html

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CIRCLE #117 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

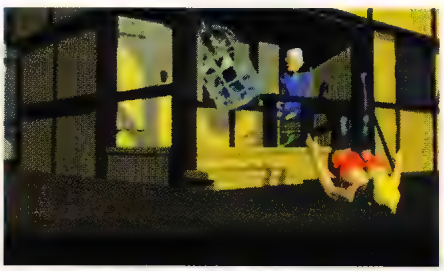
Kingdom O' Magic

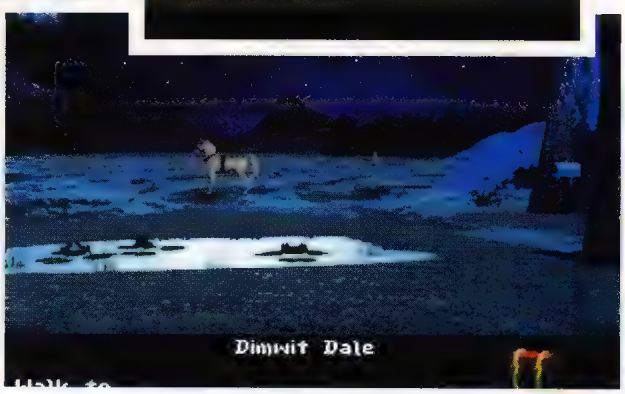
System:
IBM PC CD
Publisher:
Sales Curve Interactive
Developer:
Sales Curve Interactive
Available:
November

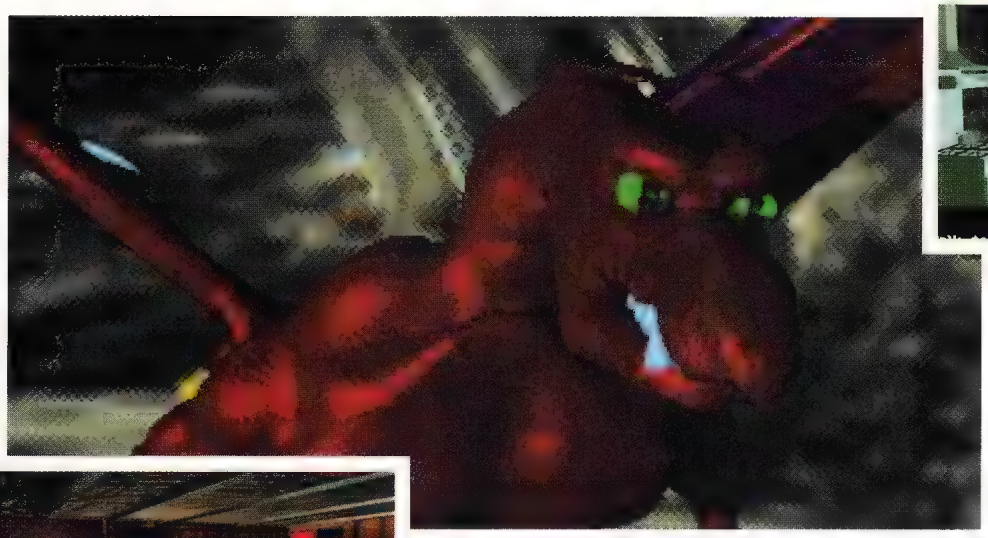
Have you ever wondered why role-playing and adventure games are so damned serious? We've been trying to figure that out for a very long time. Probably because the people who design them are usually frustrated scriptwriters who have discovered that computer games are a good outlet for their supposedly suppressed and undiscovered creative talents. Take, for example, that famous overrated seven-compact-disc game whose author (we won't use any real names here) thinks she's a writer and not a game designer. Well, it's about time that somebody finally poked a little fun at the genre, besides Mister *Leisure Suit Larry*, Al Lowe.

Kingdom O' Magic is yet another in a trilogy of interesting departures for Sales Curve Interactive, which has previously been known for doing very different games than this title. Thus, this effort shows diverse expansion for a company that, technically, is still in its adolescence. What makes this game so unique first off is *Kingdom O*'s cowriter, Alan Silberberg. His résumé includes such credentials as writing for *The Simpsons*, Disney and Jim Henson Productions. Secondly, the uncanny humor value of the game is a breath of fresh air in this otherwise stale genre. And, finally—and also from a technical standpoint—it's great to see an adventure role-playing game that combines great-looking SGI-rendered graphics with fun game play.

Kingdom O' Magic uses a traditional point-and-click interface. The pointer is an animated icon of two fingers walking when you want to select a direction on the screen to go to. Clicking on any of the game's characters other than your own brings up a set of action icons that let you choose a course of action that you can take with that specific character. For example, you can cast a spell, fight or just speak with a character. Selecting verbal interaction will get you either an instant sarcastic reply or will bring up a text box with a number of choices of spoken text that can be used with that character. Some of the game's magic spells include things like Spell O' Floater, which will make a character float helplessly in midair, and Spell O' Left the Gas On, which will make a character think he left the stove gas on in his home, thus abandoning the area. There's also an inventory box where weapons, spells and other items, such as Tupperware and toilet paper (humorously renamed Carte Blanche), can be placed.

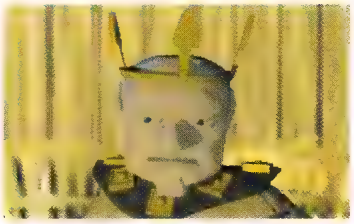




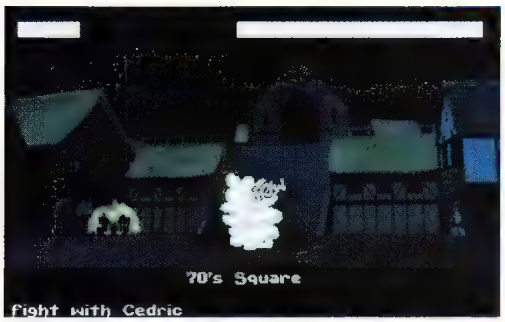


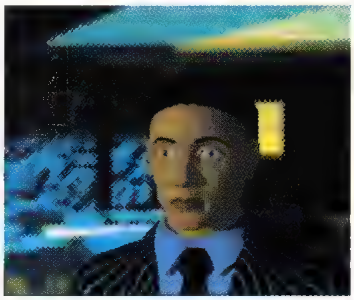
There are three different quests in *Kingdom O' Magic*: The Good Old Fashioned Traditional Quest (easy), The Magnificent 7/11 (moderately difficult) and The Slightly Bizarre and Twisted Quest (very difficult). The first quest is your stereotypical fantasy-adventure game where you travel the kingdom, battle monsters, right injustices and rescue the dragon. In the second quest, you have to recruit between seven and 11 characters who can stop Flake Town from being invaded. An in the final Bizarre and Twisted Quest you have to prevent the end of civilization by uncovering the Lost Lava Lamp of the Ancients™ (don't ask). Actually, the entire game, for the most part, is pretty twisted, not just this last quest.

There are two characters that the gamer can choose to play as. Sidney the Snake is the reptilian dude who's good in physical conflicts, while Shah-Ron is the buxom, bubbleheaded blonde who looks like she's straight out of an adult film. The game's nonplayable cast of characters is a warped array of mutants, orcs, trolls and humans. Almost all of the game's nonplayer characters are spoofs on real-world personalities. For instance, the bartender in the Jolly Mutant Tavern is a parody of Ronald Reagan, while the bouncer at the Flake Town Disco sounds like a New Yorker who breaks into the Robert DeNiro character from the movie *Taxi Driver*.



As we mentioned before, the game is essentially a humorous parody of adventure titles. One cannot help laughing at some of the corny, politically incorrect dialogue and interaction that goes on. At one point in the game, while playing as Shah-Ron, you meet a pirate ferryman at Insecure Pier. One of Shah-Ron's dialogue choices is to say to the ferryman, "Can I give you a hand?" Selecting it results in a dramatic cut to the ferryman's hand, revealing a stump with a hook and him saying, "It's wicked to mock the afflicted." *Kingdom O' Magic* is a very large and nonlinear game. There are over 90 NPCs, and it is virtually impossible to play the same game twice and get the same results. If you are a die-hard adventure-game aficionado—or even if you're not—*Kingdom O'* looks like a game that could bring welcome relief from the adventure doldrums.





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CIRCLE #119 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

reviews

HOW IT WORKS

Our reviews are the opinions of our freelance and staff writers. Games are rated on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest rating attainable.

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Casino Deluxe

Stamps of Approval

If you see either one of these stamped on a review, put down the magazine, go to your software store and purchase said game immediately.

PERFECT!
Excels in all categories. A milestone. These games are very rare.

RECOMMENDED
An overall great game. If you're an avid player of the genre, this game is a must-own for your library.

Summary Paragraph

It all ties together here, where we issue our final verdict and tell you honestly if it's a dog or a *Doom*.

review

The Ultimate Doom

The Ultimate Doom's saving grace is the modem play, making it easier than ever to connect with a friend.

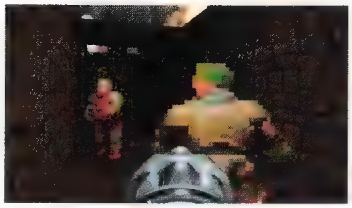
TECHBOX

Important stuff you need to know about the game, including hardware requirements, developer, publisher and price. You'll even discover some of the game's active ingredients.

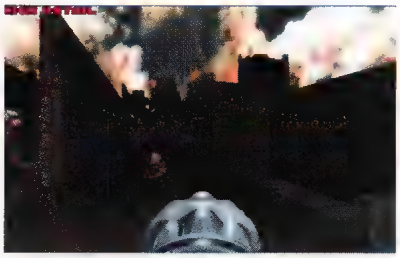
Ratings Categories

GRAPHICS: This is where we look at things like animation, background and character art, color palette, scrolling, resolution, etc.
MUSIC: Here we evaluate those wonderful musical scores.
ORIGINALITY: A look at the effort that was put into creating a unique gaming experience. Same old just doesn't cut it here.
OVERALL: This rating takes into account all of the pluses and minuses of the game. This overall rating is **not** an average of the other scores.
PLAYABILITY: Ease of game's interface, enjoyment of the task involved, control mechanism and replayability all factor in here. As a single factor, playability is the game's most important aspect.
SOUND EFFECTS: Located on the side of the human head, ears play a big part in evaluating this nonmusical aspect of the game. Creating an atmosphere is crucial.
$ VALUE: We'll tell you if the particular game is worth the hard-earned dollars that you might pay for it. With games running anywhere from $20 to $80, you might find this rating indispensable.

Doom II



I was beginning to wonder if Hell was gonna freeze over before I could get me a little slice of *Hell on Earth*.



Well jeez, it took forever and a day but it finally happened, and not a moment too soon. I was beginning to wonder if Hell was gonna freeze over before I could get me a little slice of *Hell on Earth*.

Doom-style, that is....

Truth is, me and all my Mac-marooned pals were beginning to get a little tired of *Marathon* and *Wolfenstein 3D* and all those other games that are either a little bit or a lot like *Doom*, but which just lack that certain je ne sais quoi. Hey, *Marathon*'s a cool game, but...well, there's no chaingun in it. And not enough blood. You know what I'm saying? And *Wolfenstein 3D* may have a great deal in common with *Doom*, but only in the way that a blueprint has a lot in common with a house: *Wolfenstein 3D*'s not a house. *Doom*'s a house; in fact, *Doom*'s a castle—designed by a megalomaniac and built by some very smart psychopaths.

Well, it's here, and all the waiting and anticipating has proved more than worth it. First off, I should caution you that, although it looks and plays exactly like the PC version, you'll need a *very* high-end Mac to get the most out of this conversion. My Centris 610 at home carries the game nicely if I turn the music off, go for medium resolution and settle for a 50% window. But if I get any more ambitious than that, the 610 starts to sputter and grunt, and the lights in my neighborhood start to dim like they do near a prison when some triple coed killer's getting the chair. Here at the office, though, I've seen it run on Power Macs and Quadras (believe me, the cleaners are playing this thing at night and forgetting to empty the trash cans) and it's like the Viper roller coaster at a Six Flags theme park, but with all the violent, death and gratuitous bloodshed that the Viper fortunately lacks.

And installation is a dream—much simpler than on the IBM PC version. Just double-click to install, and that's it: The software will auto-configure to suit your machine. You can also customize the installation, running it off a boot disk or even turning off the Finder. And thanks to Macintosh's highly user-friendly operating system, you can adjust detail and other variables, like sound volume and music, at any time during the game.

Well, I could sit here all night and tell you that *Doom* kicks monumental booty, and that it's the hottest game around, but, unless you've been in a maximum security penitentiary in solitary confinement and grade five lockdown for the past 18 months, you probably already know that. Now Macintosh-heads can stop feeling like a beleaguered minority and join the real world: *Doom* for the Mac offers them full rights of citizenship.

TECHBOX

Retail Price:	$50
Available:	Now
Genre:	Action
Media:	Floppy Disk
Developer:	Lion Entertainment
Publisher:	GT Interactive
	16 E. 40th St.
	New York, NY 10016
Phone:	212.951.3158
Minimum System Requirements:	Macintosh 040 Series
	8 Megabytes RAM
	20 Megabytes Hard Drive
Contents:	Heaven, in Hell

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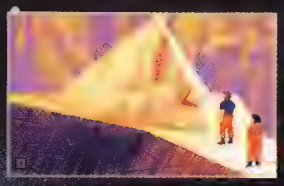
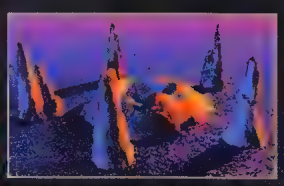
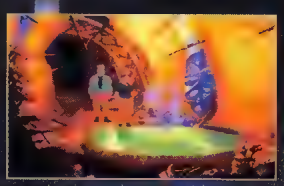

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CIRCLE #118 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

LUCAS

by Kevin McCann

Fury3

Fury3 has been designed to run in tandem with *Windows 95*.

TECHBOX	
Retail Price:	$49.95
Available:	Now
Genre:	Action
Media:	Compact Disc
Developer:	Terminal Reality
Publisher:	Microsoft
	One Microsoft Way
	Redmond, WA 98052
Phone:	206.882.8080
Minimum System Requirements:	IBM PC 486, 66 MHz
	Windows 3.1
	8 Megabytes RAM
	15 Megabytes Hard Disk
	Double-speed CD-ROM
Contents:	Fighters, Lasers, Missiles, Bosses, Explosions

In yet another bold step toward world domination, Microsoft knows what people really want—games. Subsequently, it shouldn't come as any big surprise that the theme for Microsoft's 3-D action shooter deals with aliens trying to take over Earth. Your job is to eliminate as many Microsoft employees and facilities as possible, engaging various bosses until you eventually take on Lord Boss Supreme, Mr. Gates himself! Well, that's not *really* the storyline—it's just the standard protect Earth then hunt down the bad guys where they came from.

At first glance, Microsoft's *Fury3* could easily be mistaken for 3DRealms' *Terminal Velocity*—which isn't surprising, since Microsoft licensed 3DRealms' *Terminal Velocity* engine to produce *Fury3*. The only really noticeable difference between the games is that *Fury3* only runs under *Windows*—who would've guessed? Still, the two games are basically carbon copies of each other, and *Fury3* doesn't introduce anything innovative over *Terminal Velocity*.

The action, however, still remains the same. Scour several different planets, blasting airborne enemies and decimating ground targets, navigate extremely dangerous tunnels and defeat different bosses at the end of each world. Variations of the weapons found within *Terminal Velocity* await to assist you through these destructive times, although the main variations lie within name changes. Power-ups are also very plentiful, ranging from shield boosts to invisibility.

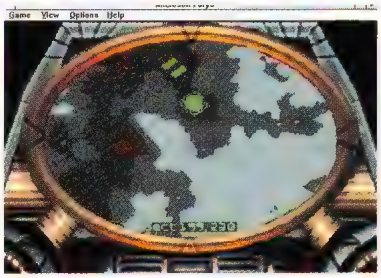
Graphically, *Fury3* has detailed enemies, terrain and explosive effects—much like those found in *Terminal Velocity*. On the downside, *Fury3* does tend to run a tad slower under *Windows*.

Whether you're launching salvos of missiles at enemies or punching your

Tunnels often have caches of weapons and power-ups, but be careful—the tunnels themselves are virtually alive, with moving walls in addition to enemies.

Follow the radar arrow to locate and destroy assigned targets.

The chase view allows you to follow behind your ship, giving the game an even more arcade-like perspective.

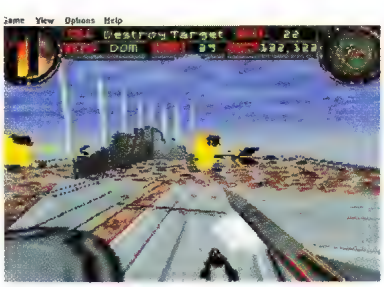


afterburner to make tracks, the sound effects in *Fury3* aren't anything really new over *Terminal Velocity*. That is to say that the sound effects are adequate, but deeper explosions would have been better.

Unfortunately, the music, while slightly different from *Terminal Velocity*, is similar in one primary respect—it's not very good. Although the techno beat matches the action, the music becomes tiresome very fast. Perhaps they should contact the music writers for *Descent* next time around—a game that possessed both great sound effects and music, together helping to create a more ambient atmosphere.

Atmosphere is really the biggest problem with *Fury3*—a problem that plagued *Terminal Velocity* too. While there are certainly enough enemies to kill, blow up and otherwise dispose of, there's no real sense of being there. Intensity and urgency are lost, and the enemies themselves are very limited in their intelligence, often flying past you to get in front of your guns.

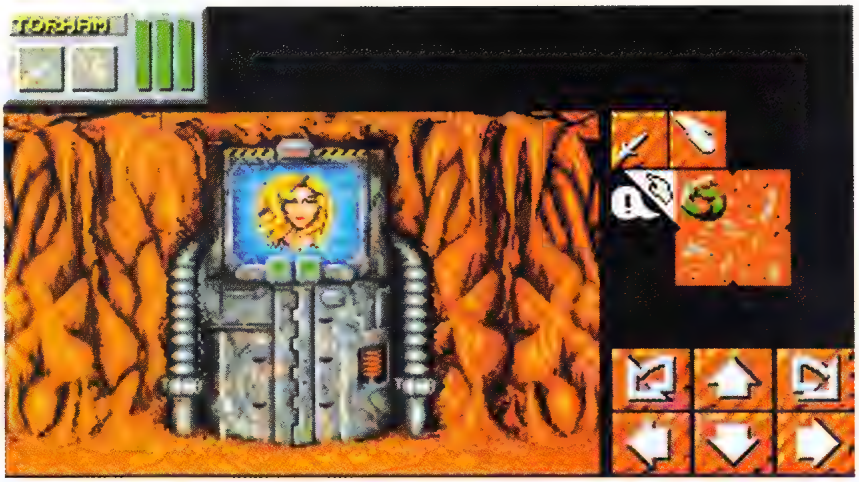
That's not to say that *Fury3* or its predecessor are all that bad, it's just that they could have been much more—especially *Fury3*, which should have used the extra time to improve upon the original, not clone it. Those who enjoyed *Terminal Velocity* will no doubt enjoy what basically equates to a mission disc add-on, but those who didn't won't care for *Fury3* either, since nothing has really changed. The only fury that one might find is that this title is unremarkably like *Terminal Velocity*.



Live out those dreams of blowing up construction vehicles with missiles!

by Zach Meston

Dungeon Master II: Skullkeep



Ah, yes, puzzles. These were *Dungeon Master*'s greatest strength, and they're *Skullkeep*'s, too.

Lord Almighty, but do I remember *Dungeon Master*. Released for the venerable Atari ST a few days before the end of 1986, and brought over to the Commodore Amiga several months later, *Dungeon Master* gave the computer role-playing genre a much-needed kick in the behind. With its real-time combat (the first computer RPG with that feature), a wonderful interface, and brilliantly designed puzzles, *Dungeon Master* became an obsession for hordes of ST and Amiga users, my own Amiga-lovin' self included. FTL followed up *Dungeon Master* with a hastily prepared expansion disk called *Chaos Strikes Back*, but it didn't have the same magic as *DM*, and it was so difficult that I've yet to meet anyone who actually finished the damn thing.

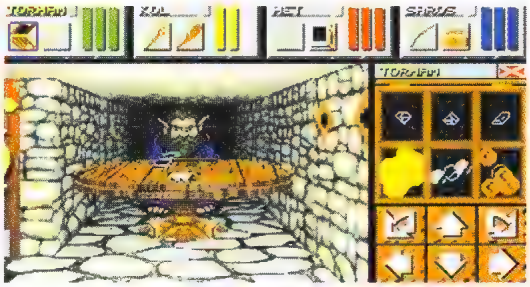
So, here we are, nine years later, and *Dungeon Master II: Skullkeep*—the true sequel to *Dungeon Master*—is being released. Why almost a decade since part uno? First, because the small staff at FTL spent years porting the original *DM* onto every game system known to man. Second, because *DM II* languished in development hell for months while Interplay threw over a dozen graphic artists and musicians at the game to bring it up to modern standards—an only partially successful effort, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

DM II places you in control of a party of four adventurers known as Champions, chosen from a pool of 16 dudes and dudettes. One character, Torham Zed, is a guaranteed member of the party, but the other three are chosen at your whim. You can't choose other Champions once your party has been formed, but you can change the Champions' default names

TECHBOX

Retail Price:	$49.95
Available:	Now
Genre:	Adventure
Media:	Compact Disc
Developer:	FTL/Software Heaven, Inc.
Publisher:	Interplay Productions 17922 Fitch Avenue Irvine, CA 92714
Phone:	714.553.6655
Minimum System Requirements:	IBM PC 386-25MHz or Better MS-DOS 5.0 or Better VGA Graphics Card Four Megabytes RAM
Contents:	23 Megabytes Hard Disk Space Cartoony Monsters, Obsolete Graphics, and Classic Gameplay

The manual sets up *DM II*'s detailed background story, but the game itself has hardly a story at all.



***DM II* places you in control of a party of four adventurers known as Champions, chosen from a pool of 16 dudes and dudettes.**

(a tidbit not mentioned in the terrible instruction manual). You can't import saved games from *DM* or *Chaos Strikes Back*, but then, it wouldn't make any damn sense if you could.

The manual sets up *DM II*'s detailed background story, but the game itself has hardly a story at all. There are no NPCs to interact with, and not much reading other than the occasional scroll or dirty magazine. (Just kidding about the scrolls.) Your goal is, put simply, to reach the top of Castle Skullkeep and kill a big, bad wizard by the name of Dragoth.

The first half of *DM II* has you exploring a monstrously large outdoor area called the Thicket, gathering the four pieces of the Castle Key. Each area of the Thicket is loaded with creatures, and a precious few puzzles. Once you assemble the Key and get into the Castle proper, the game play shifts gears, going from an emphasis on combat to an emphasis on puzzle-solving.

Ah, yes, puzzles. These were *Dungeon Master*'s greatest strength, and they're *Skullkeep*'s, too. The designers intentionally chose step-based movement over *DOOM*-style free movement to design trickier puzzles, and the trade-off works. What's especially neat is that, like the original *DM*, *Skullkeep*'s game engine is open-ended enough to allow for several methods to solve certain puzzles.

If you played the original *DM* and wanna know what's different about *DM II*—well, not too much. The combat interface has been tweaked (but not in a good way—now you can't cast spells and swing weapons at the same time). You have a money box to keep your coins in. You find several magic maps that show your surroundings. (No auto-mapping, though.) The biggest difference: the Thicket has several merchants from whom you can buy and sell weapons and items.

DM II's graphics, created by Andy Jaros—who also did the visuals for the original *DM*—have been heavily altered by Interplay's gaggle of artists, but all those folks have done more harm than good. Jaros' stark, frightening monsters (which can be seen in the Sega CD version of *Skullkeep*, released last year by JVC) have been replaced by Barney-esque creatures, which leads me to believe the rumor that several of Interplay's artists were previously Disney animators. Even worse, *DM II* is VGA only, and 320 x 200 pixels can't help but look weak in this era of SVGA pizzazz. The stereo sound effects are decent—some of them were yanked directly from the original *DM*—but nothing special. As for background tunage, the piano- and violin-heavy MIDI score is excellent.

***Dungeon Master II* won't win any awards for its, uh, "vintage" graphics, but *DM* was never about visual flash anyway. It was about addictive game play, which its sequel has in spades. *Skullkeep* isn't the groundbreaking role-playing game that its big brother was, but it is good fun while it lasts.**

Dust

Dust's graphics leave most other adventure games in just that—dust.

Your last game of poker cost you all of your possessions and nearly your life. Taking off to the desert, you stumble into Diamondback, a small Western town with a population of about three dozen people. Puzzles, gambling and gunfights await—this is your kind of place! Welcome to the Western adventure *Dust*, Cyberflix's latest title, from the team responsible for past titles such as *Jump Raven* and *Lunicus*.

However, whereas *Jump Raven* and *Lunicus* both failed to inspire me heavily, *Dust* is easily Cyberflix's most professional-looking title to date. But whereas appearances can be deceiving, fortunately, *Dust* also manages to combine a storyline and intuitive game play that easily make *Dust* Cyberflix's best game yet.

Both *Jump Raven* and *Lunicus* suffered from less than perfect interfaces. Both games were heavy on the action and needed streamlined interfaces to make combat as easy as possible, but, instead, offered slightly cumbersome controls. *Dust*, on the other hand, isn't so much about timing as it is just exploring, talking with the residents, solving puzzles and gambling. Gunfights are more toward the arcade aspect, but they're not the predominant aspect of *Dust*. *Dust*'s interface is also very easy to use, not boggling the player with loads of options to ponder.

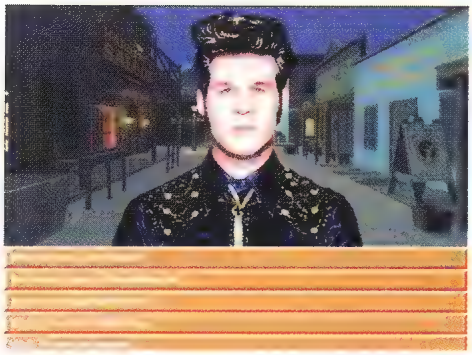
One of the more interesting aspects of *Dust* is money. You need it to survive, but you start with very little to your name. The solution? Gambling! Poker, blackjack and slot machines. But these are the actual games, not just automatic events. Thus, you'd better brush up on your poker before taking on the local gambling pro.

Whether you're strolling down the streets of Diamondback or partaking in a gunfight, *Dust*'s graphics leave most other adventure games in just that—dust. The town of Diamondback is beautifully rendered in SVGA graphics, and stepping forward smoothly scrolls the graphics, as does looking left or right. Minor touches also add to the game, such as shooting stars that

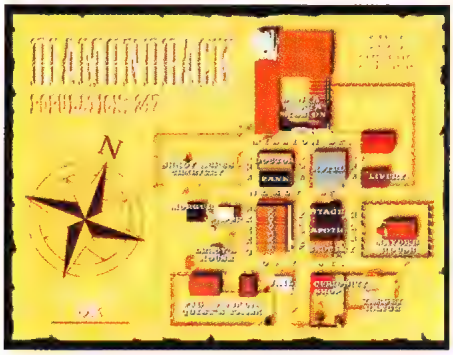
What better way to soothe the savage beast than offering this li'l ol' doggy a bone?

TECHBOX

Retail Price:	$59.95
Available:	Now
Genre:	Adventure
Media:	Compact Disc
Developer:	Cyberflix
Publisher:	GTE Interactive P.O. Box 4358 Carlsbad, CA 92018-4358
Phone:	800 GTE TODAY
Minimum System Requirements:	IBM PC 486/66 *Windows 95, Windows 3.1, or Windows NT 3.51* 8 Megabytes RAM Double-speed CD-ROM SVGA Video Card
Contents:	Cowboys, Indians, Saloons and Gunfights



Jackalope is just one of three dozen different characters that you can draw into a conversation.



can be seen at night.

Many of the assorted villagers can be found by roaming the streets. The residents themselves are animated extremely well when walking from place to place, adding realism not only graphically but in the sense that the villagers do have lives and don't stay standing in one place all day. Choosing to speak with one calls them over, and they subsequently change to digitized actors for close and personal chitchat.

Most of the voice acting and digitized actors are rather stereotyped-looking as well as sounding, but they all fit their parts well. *Dust* thankfully doesn't try to take itself too seriously, adding touches of humor throughout the game. The spaghetti Western style music will have you almost expecting Clint Eastwood to show up at times, adding to the atmosphere.

As the only law in Diamondback, you'll find it's necessary to dispense some lead to deal with the unruly types.

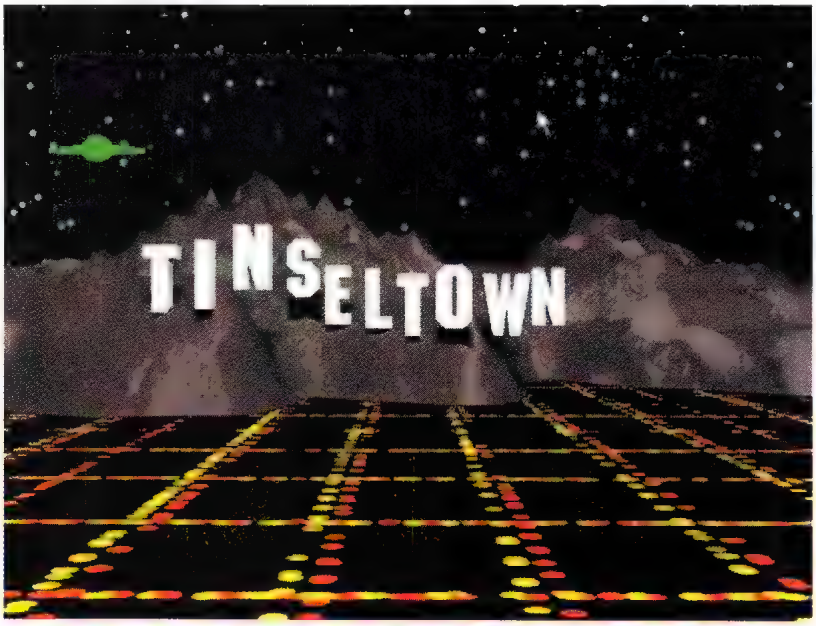
In a genre that's left mostly untapped except for *Alone in the Dark 3* (and even then that was dealing with undead cowboys in a ghost town), *Dust* is a refreshing Western adventure that caters to many categories with its share of puzzles, real card games, interaction with locals and even gunfights. The Old West never looked so good.

The inventory system lets you quickly check what you've got, as well as examine items.

by Al Giovetti

Paparazzi:

Tales of Tinseltown



In *Paparazzi*, all the user has to do is make a mistake and the budding photographer is fired—end of story and end of "game."

Paparazzi is the first game from a three-year-old Dallas company, Museworthy Inc. The FMV, first-person-perspective, puzzle and action product claims to be an interactive film and not a game at all. Jim Freeman, Museworthy producer, says *Paparazzi* is an attempt to define a new medium that is neither film nor game, but a synthesis of both.

The product succeeds as a film, with humorous, campy scripting, effective comic timing, professional sets, enjoyable music and excellent acting from over 60 actors and actresses set within the limits of computer-based, full-motion video. You end up playing the "game" to see the video. But to label the product interactive is misleading.

In order to be interactive, the user must be able to cause significant changes to the plot. In *Paparazzi*, all the user has to do is make a mistake and the budding photographer is fired—end of story and end of "game." One mistake in most cases is enough for the player to lose and be sent right back to the beginning, since the one save for the each of six characters is updated at the end of the video for each location.

What there is of a plot challenges the player, a photographer just out of art school, to take photos of 24 Tinseltown stars in 14 days. Each day, the player must travel to four locations from a top-down map of 13. Up to two photos can be taken from a camera mat screen at each location. The paparazzi obtains vague and obscure clues by channel surfing six local cable channels, receiving phone calls from Tinseltown residents and by visiting local sites, most notably a camera shop and bar frequented by other photographers.

You must take very careful written notes from the hard-to-hear and understand video clues, which, thankfully, can be replayed as often as necessary, since there is no optional text. All of the two hours of video appears at 1/5 the screen size, matted with various graphic representations, such as the two-shot "MiNikon" camera. Most of the game play centers around the Palminator 2000 FMV screen mat, which is the portal to all the locations in the game.

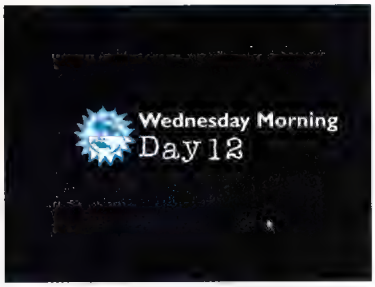
Once the two to six clues are gathered, one must make the connection as to the ideal location to film the personalities. Andy Warthog's picture required six clues over a ten-day period. One clue used numbers to refer to letters of the alphabet and another required an association of ashes with Wednesday, which will be lost on

TECHBOX

Retail Price:	$49.95
Available:	Now
Genre:	Puzzle
Media:	Compact Disk
Developer:	Museworthy Inc.
Publisher:	Activision 11601 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 100 Los Angeles, CA 90025
Phone:	310.473.9200
Minimum System Requirements:	IBM PC 33 MHz 486 8 Megabytes RAM 22 Megabytes Hard Drive Double-speed CD-ROM Drive
Contents:	Hollywood Moguls, Hunk Stars, Sexy Starlets, Alien Encounters and Flying Doggy Poop

Gamers can access tips, gossip and assignments via the Palminator 2000.

The product was designed to have female appeal, and the company reports that women testers liked the product best.



those whose faith doesn't observe Ash Wednesday.

When visiting a site, the 1/5 screen video within the mat jerks violently at points in a lame attempt to make the game more difficult and arcade-like. The player must take the right picture within a few seconds or the shot is lost. The logic behind what picture is the most revealing is also obscure. The fully exposed breast of the hypersexual putz Virgin Mary Madonna character is worth nothing, while a picture of her losing her blonde wig is worth thousands. Go figure.

The ultracampy satirical comedy is the only endearing and saving feature of the product. Many cable channels have repeating video sequences, like the "no fish drink beer" channel, watching the grass grow channel or the water cooler bubbles channel. One money picture shows a "femi-Nazi" dominatrix whipping Rusk Limberger. The only way to get a picture of Shawn Pendelton is to catch him in the john where his fearsome fists will be occupied.

All the video sequences and puzzles have a professional integrated feel that, once understood, gives you a kind of artsy satisfaction. You will definitely groan when you hear some of the puzzle solutions. The video sequences are more like a series of *Saturday Night Live* sketches than a game with an integrated plot.

The product was designed to have female appeal, and the company reports that women testers liked the product best. The first three characters to choose from in the game are women photographers. There is even a gratuitous bare-behind-in-the-sun sequence at beautiful Bigwell Lake that would make Mel Gibson jealous.

The excellent, enjoyable, live music performed by Jason English, who also did the Foley sound effects, encompasses a wide variety of popular styles and suits the product well.

***Paparazzi* has good, but short, full-motion video sequences, with good, overly campy, funny acting. Good script, but no plot, with excellent music and sound effects. Unfortunately, the product is not a game, the clues and puzzles are lame and many will be put off at how short it is. The lack of save games and the unforgiving and extremely linear "plot" put the nails in the coffin.**

review
by Bernard Dy

The Last Dynasty

The Last Dynasty is Coktel Vision's *Inca* adventure engine with many enhancements.

TECHBOX	
Retail Price:	$59.95
Available:	Now
Genre:	Action/Adventure
Media:	Compact Disc
Developer:	Coktel Vision
Publisher:	Sierra On-Line 3380 146th Place SE, Suite 300 Bellevue, WA 98007
Phone:	206.649.9800
Minimum System Requirements:	IBM PC 486, 33 MHz *Windows 3.1* or *Windows 95* 8 Megabytes RAM 4 Megabytes Hard Disk Double-speed CD-ROM drive
Contents:	Space Opera, Low-budget Sets, High-res Graphics

Remember *Inca*? It was one of the earlier products that Sierra ported over from French developer Coktel Vision. It was followed by a sequel, *Inca II*. Both games were action adventures praised for attempts at being original, but were also a little campy and suffered from dated adventure engines.

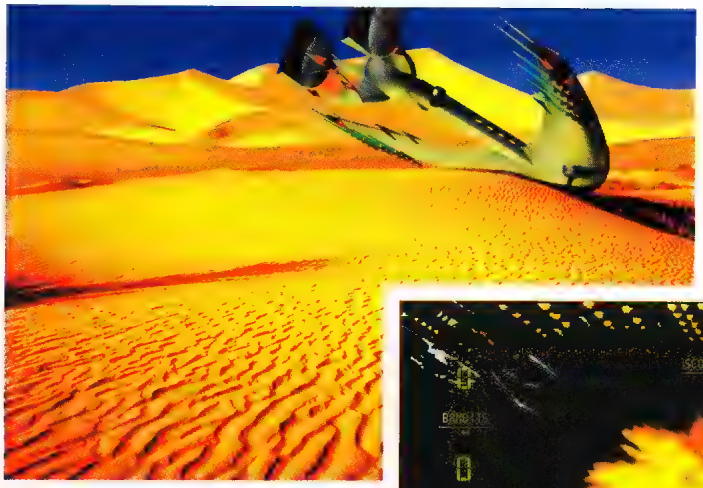
The Last Dynasty is the latest from this line, and it's a marked improvement. Very much like the *Inca* games, *The Last Dynasty* is an adventure/action game hybrid. The adventure mode looks like *Myst*'s, utilizing a first-person perspective. The action mode contains spaceflight arcade sequences with a *Wing Commander*-like presentation. There is an adventure segment between two space combat segments.

The graphics used in both parts are fabulous. Gone are the bland panels used for adventure portions of the Incas, supplanted by crisp and colorful SVGA backgrounds. The action scenes also take advantage of *Windows*' high-resolution capability by fitting a large variety of detail into the ship cockpits and displays. Even the video clips are much improved from earlier grainy offerings.

Interestingly, performance remains strong with all of these added trimmings. Unlike *Myst* or the *Star Trek Technical Manual* CD-ROM, the adventure segments here update quickly, and moving from one point to another is smooth on a fast 486. Walking through the 3-D space station in the adventure segment is worth doing just for the fun of it.

Of course, you can't just meander around the game looking at pretty pictures. You're playing for a purpose. You're going to save the universe again, just like you did in all those other computer games!

Mel is your alter ego this time around, and from your friend Dok, you learn that aliens are visiting the planet. You wonder what the heck he's talking about, but play along and before you know it, you've been abducted and put in a spaceship faster than you can say "last starfighter." It turns out you and Dok aren't really Earthlings at all, but aliens jettisoned there in your youth to avoid capture by the villain named Iron. Iron is trying to capture the two sons of Yannis, of which you are one,



to harness something they share called the Ultimate Knowledge. Your brother, Lem, has since been captured, and Yannis now wants to send you to a different place for safekeeping.

As you set off in a fighter, you'll have the opportunity to visit other worlds and try to win allies to your father's side. Ultimately, you'll have to also go to Iron's space station to destroy the clone he's made of Lem. *The Last Dynasty* is pretty fun, though the adventure is not as complex and involving as some games we're used to like some of Sierra's own adventure games. Most of it is "inventory scavenger hunt and manipulation," but that's okay, most adventures are like that. The puzzles are generally easy with a few oddballs thrown in, but nothing the usual trial and error experimentation can't solve.

The combat is similar with regard to products like *Wing Commander* and *TIE Fighter*. It's simpler, but still an improvement over *Inca II*. Now you'll have wingmen flying with you and each mission has an objective. There are a variety of cockpit displays that can be customized to individual preference, and the action is fluid. Views out all sides of the ship are available, as is the 3-D map that allows you to view the battlefield and assign general orders to escorting craft. Occasionally during combat, the game will play animated segments of the ships in action, and, while these are pretty to look at, they can be a disorienting interruption. The last complaint is about something all foreign built games seem to suffer from...milestone save games! You can't save exactly where you want in combat mode. There are some sections that you just have to survive to get past. If you get sick of the combat stuff, check for cheat codes, soon to be published in COMPUTER PLAYER.

The combat is similar with regard to products like *Wing Commander* and *TIE Fighter*.

The production qualities of the game are solid. The music is good, the acting and dubbed voices are far superior to *Inca II*'s and the difficulty level makes it accessible for many audiences. There's still a little camp, but, depending on how you view it, it can be a part of the game's charm. Probably a decent buy for *Rebel Assault* or *Daedalus Encounter* fans.

review
by Al Giovetti

The Last Bounty Hunter

Once all the minor bad guys are killed, the gamer faces the outlaw leader in a final shootout.

Like *Mad Dog McCree* and *Mad Dog II* from American Laser Games, in *The Last Bounty Hunter* the gamer shoots at bad guys while the movie runs. Other movies fill in the areas between the shooting sequences.

If you shoot all the bad guys and avoid hitting the good guys, you progress to the next shooting or cut-scene. There is very little plot: Just shoot or be shot. There are no interactive conversations, exploration or puzzles that make up an entire world to help immerse the gamer into the life of the Wild West.

The entire game has only four choices. You can pick the order you hunt down four outlaw leaders that General Rigs asks you to kill in the first shootout of the game. Each shootout is carried on in up to three separate segments of from four to six bad guys who jump out at you from doorways, off-scene and behind rocks. Once all the minor bad guys are killed, the gamer faces the outlaw leader in a final shootout. Once you kill all four leaders, you win the game.

Each player starts with three lives and a small amount of gold. The gold is earned by killing bad guys and can be used to restore lost lives when a doctor appears between scenes.

The player shoots his six-shooter or shotgun by pressing the left mouse button and pointing a crosshair at the bad guy. The gun reloads by pointing at the lower-right screen and pushing the right button. For an extra $54.95, you can buy a PC GameGun to shoot at the bad guys. While the PC GameGun may prove to be an effective shooting device, the gun was not reviewed with this software title.

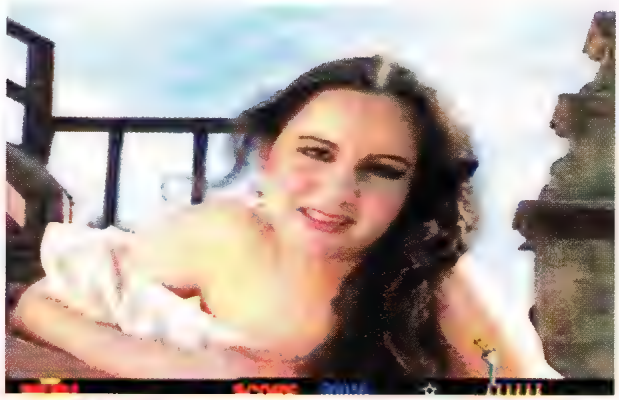
The player can also face down a bad guy in a high noon shootout. The player must load his gun before he shoots in a shootout. This attempt to simulate the action of drawing a gun does not work well with the mouse. If the player is killed enough, he can place the gun crosshairs on the area of the screen where the bad guy will appear, making the game insanely easy the more it's played.

The game designers limit the player to one save game and have added a lot of close-up shots and camera movement to make the game more difficult. While the game did become more difficult, the necessity of adding these frustrating elements to the game in an attempt to lengthen game play is a poor substitute for game content. As it is, the game should take no more than a couple of hours to play, with

Shoot cattle skulls, wagon wheels and lanterns to get more money and lives.

T E C H B O X

Retail Price:	$49.95
Available:	Now
Genre:	Action
Media:	Compact Disc
Developer:	American Laser Games
Publisher:	American Laser Games 4801 Road NE Albuquerque, NM 87109
Phone:	505.880.1718
Minimum System Requirements:	IBM PC 33 MHz 4 Megabytes RAM 565 K Conventional Memory 500 K Hard Drive Double-speed CD-ROM Drive
Contents:	Dance Hall Girls, Dirty Outlaws, Clean Outlaws, Cattle Skulls, Wagon Wheels and Poorly Defined Hot Spots



You don't need to hit the outlaw—just fire at the screen where it is hot.

Shooting many times will not help, but precise timing will.

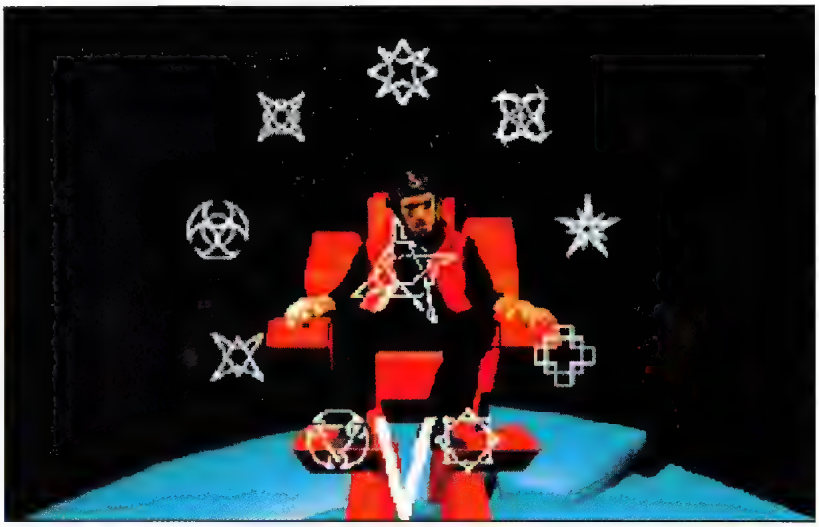
very little replay value.

The graphics are the same digitized, full-motion video seen in the previous games in the series, with blurred images and telltale jagged edges around every object. The animation is less choppy and much smoother when played on a Pentium processor with a double-speed drive.

The acting by a cast of over 100 actors, including a world champion quick draw artist, is descent. The filming at the Old Tucson Studios, which has been used in many Hollywood movies, provides an interesting period backdrop for the game. The music and speech become very distracting and annoying when scenes replay over and over, and they can only be turned down or off if you have a volume control on your speakers.

Bounty Hunter **has fair graphics and animation, and partially succeeds as a shoot-'em-up game. It leaves a lot to be desired in the areas of replay value, plot and length of play. Those who are looking for something with a little depth are advised to look elsewhere.**

Burn:Cycle



This game is very cool, and that's not a superlative you'll see often in my reviews.

Just in time to save PC users from CD console platform envy is TripMedia's *Burn:Cycle*. This game is very cool, and that's not a superlative you'll see often in my reviews. *Burn:Cycle* is the story of your character, a data courier/pirate, working to save himself from a virus injected into his head. The virus was planted in Cutter when he and his partner/girlfriend Kris were on a corporate info heist that blew up in their faces, killing Kris in the process. Now, you've got about two hours of real time to solve this case. You'll need to see if the heist was a setup, get revenge for Kris' death and, most importantly, get the deadly virus and information out of your head. In other words, *Burn:Cycle* is the game that *Johnny Mnemonic* should have been.

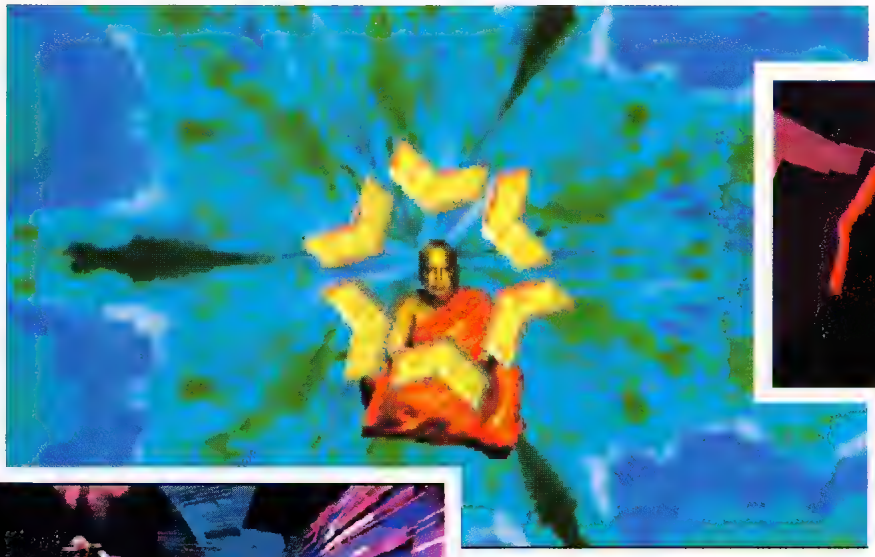
In fact, the parallels between William Gibson's work and *Burn:Cycle* are many. Most obvious is the main character, who has the aforementioned job and problems, and a lady assassin for a partner. The setting for the game is a very gloomy but electric world, borrowing a lot from *Blade Runner*. What is impressive is how well it all works, even in slightly blurry VGA. The music, sound effects and dialogue all evoke the feel of this techno future. Look at the opening screen of a dark metropolis. Skyscrapers peppered with sparks of light reach up plaintively, animated by the building-mounted movie screens that run drug advertisement videos. Hovercars screech by, briefly interrupting the drone of the city noise.

The entire game is like that, and it's a testament to the backgrounds of the designers, composed of a filmmaker, a writer and an artist. Most of the game is dark, utilizing shadows and somber palettes, with occasional fluorescent highlights on the main characters, drawing our attention to them. My high score for graphics reflects not so much the resolution as it does the excellent use of lighting, color and style. Also stylishly done is the pacing and storytelling, which is a blend of action sequences and flashbacks. There's even a trip to cyberspace, or what *Burn:Cycle* calls the "Televerse."

Most of the game is viewed in a first-person perspective. Very much

TECHBOX

Retail Price:	N/A
Available:	Now
Genre:	Action/Interactive Movie
Media:	Compact Disc
Developer:	TripMedia
Publisher:	Philips 10960 Wilshire Blvd., 8th Fl. Los Angeles, CA 90024
Phone:	310.444.6666
Minimum System Requirements:	IBM PC 486, 33 MHz *Windows 3.1* 8 Megabytes RAM 1/2 Megabytes Hard Drive Macintosh 68040 5 Megabytes RAM Double-speed CD-ROM Drive
Contents:	Tough Guys, Tough Girls and the *Real* Johnny Mnemonic



The detail of the screen is blurred a bit when moving, but, when the motion stops, the picture sharpens.

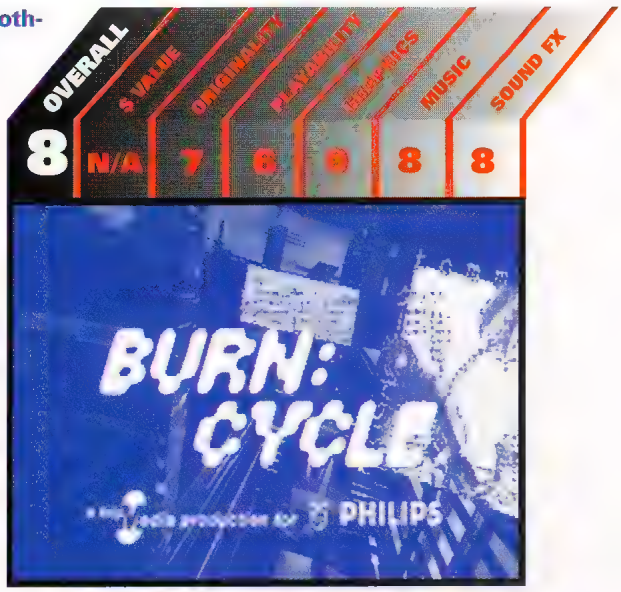
like the navigation engine used in *Myst* or *USS Ticonderoga*, you'll glide through 3-D rendered environments a step at a time. The detail of the screen is blurred a bit when moving, but, when the motion stops, the picture sharpens. Other characters you deal with are animated, but unimportant nonplayers are strangely seen as immobile, cardboard cutouts. Though I'd normally find fault with this, it seems to work here and is a better alternative than leaving a bunch of rooms empty. It somewhat enforces the idea that this society is inhabited by drugged slackers.

The adventure segments alternate with the arcade segments and puzzles. Most of the arcade exercises are easy, once you know what you're supposed to do. The puzzles are also ambiguous at first, but most can be solved with trial and error. The challenge is to disable the virus before it removes pieces of your existence by erasing your memories. Since the game counts down in real time, you don't have the luxury to explore the game's environment at a relaxed pace. If you don't have enough time at the end of the game, Cutter will die. Since the time ticks off even during video sequences and save game actions, you sometimes feel a little helpless. This is also true because *Burn:Cycle* doesn't tell you a lot about each new challenge or puzzle. You often have to explore, figure things out, then restart from a saved game and do it all again—fast. This is part of the game's challenge, but I found it frustrating.

To save headaches, read Zach Meston's strategy guide in COMPUTER PLAYER 1.8. Do yourself a favor, though, and play each piece without peeking first, just to see all the different things in the game. You'll feel cheated with a walk-through because it will end the game in an hour and you'll miss some great punch lines. There's really more game time than that, if you explore all the options.

My high score for graphics reflects not so much the resolution as it does the excellent use of lighting, color and style.

***Burn:Cycle*'s premise is nothing new, but it is followed through with fine execution. The console version's puzzles and arcade gimmicks don't translate any better to the PC, and may bore sophisticated PC gamers. Fortunately, the story hasn't changed either. It's a tale filled with plot twists, gritty dialogue, special effects and good performances. That's something you don't get every day from a movie or a game.**



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The crush of helmets, the thud of pads, the smooth silk of the ball as it settles into your waiting hands. The grass falling away behind you as you run.

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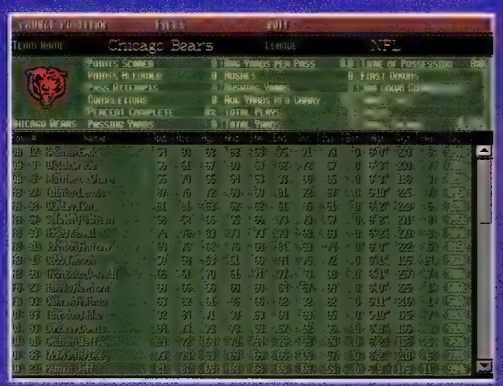

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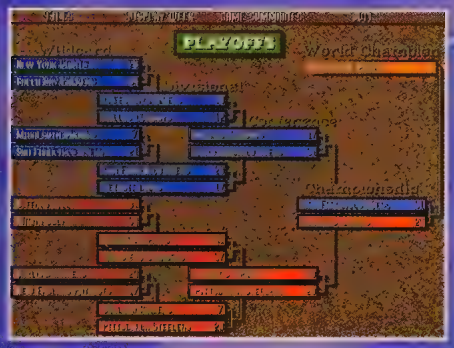

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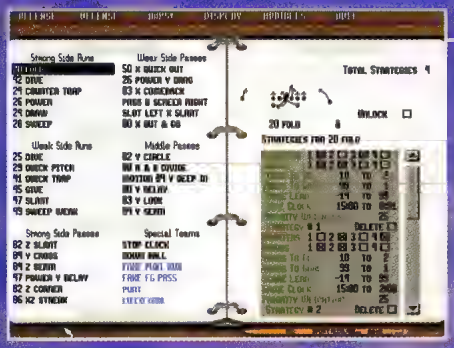
Enjoy the fast-action automatic pass reception, or keep your opponent on his toes with the real-time "Pro" passing mode.

See every play up close and personal – back angles, reverse angles, side angles, even helmet cameras!



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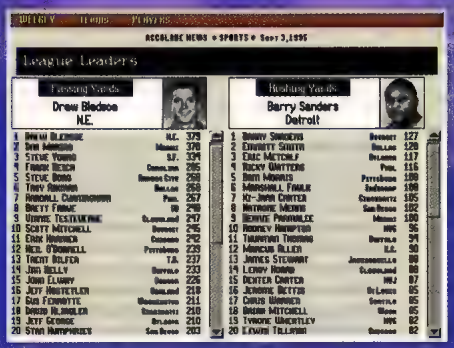

Check out the game summaries and look over stats during season play. Over 100 different stats and ratings!

- expanded plays
- General Manager options

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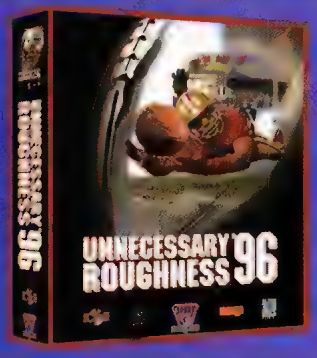
The replays are almost as much fun as the plays themselves! See action on-screen like never before with unlimited camera angles!



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CIRCLE #120 ON READER SERVICE CARD

review

by Kevin McCann

Phantasmagoria

Those who remember Sierra's *Time Zone* from the 1980s will notice that it has something in common with *Phantasmagoria.*

If there's one thing that can be said about the *King's Quest* series, it's that the games themselves always had nice, warm atmospheres. The characters, whether good or bad, were still pretty nice by today's standards. Apparently the designer, Roberta Williams, wanted to do something that *wasn't* so nice. So she decided to design a game that would lure an older audience into a more "mature" gaming experience, complete with mind-bending puzzles and mind-splattering pendulums. That wasn't very nice.

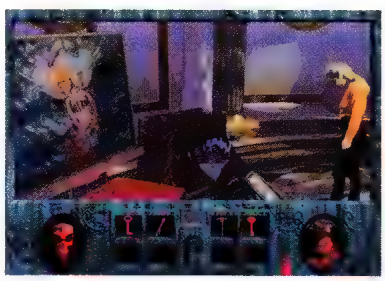
Welcome to *Phantasmagoria*, in which you play the part of Adrienne, who, along with her husband, moves into a large, sprawling island mansion built by a famous illusionist. Oh by the way, what the realtor left out was the minor detail that the mansion is occupied by a *terrible evil presence.*

Those who remember Sierra's *Time Zone* from the 1980s will notice that it has something in common with *Phantasmagoria*—the excessive number of discs. Whereas *Time Zone* came on ten diskettes (un*heard* of at the time), *Phantasmagoria* takes the lead in today's standards, comprising a total of seven CDs.

Naturally, that means *Phantasmagoria* is loaded with video interwoven throughout the game. Fortunately, the acting is good, not great, but better than most CD-ROM titles available for computers. You come to sympathize and empathize with Adrienne, which is an accomplishment in itself.

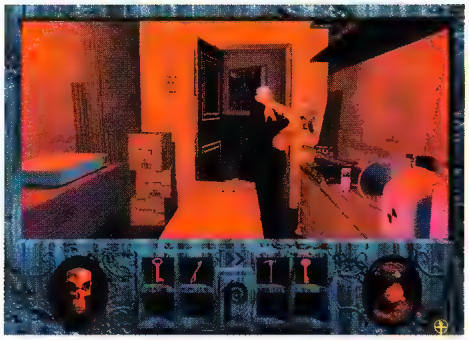
Taking up the rest of that space are the background graphics of the mansion and various settings therein, which, for the most part, are beautifully detailed and give the feeling of being on a very large estate. Unfortunately, *Phantasmagoria* lacks the three-dimensional freedom of Access' *Under a Killing Moon*, instead relying on a point-and-click interface to guide Adrienne through her surroundings, more akin to the *King's Quest* series. On the bright side, the graphics are at least sharper for the most part than *Under a Killing Moon*'s rendered environment.

Complementing the video and graphics is the atmospheric music, reminiscent of the *Omen* movie series at times. The music definitely helps in



TECHBOX

Retail Price:	$59.95
Available:	Now
Genre:	Adventure
Media:	Seven Compact Discs
Developer:	Sierra On-Line
Publisher:	Sierra On-Line P.O. Box 3404 Salinas, CA 93912
Phone:	800.757.7707
Minimum System Requirements:	IBM PC 486, 25 MHz *Windows 3.1* SVGA Capable Video Card Double-speed CD-ROM 8 Megabytes RAM 5 Megabytes Hard Disk
Contents:	Large Mansion to Explore, Evil Presence, Violence and Gore, Puzzles



Strangulation is probably the *least* graphic death that Adrienne will encounter when she missteps.

Ah, nothing like the convenience of having various torture devices within your home.

creating that uneasy feeling as Adrienne gets deeper and deeper into trouble.

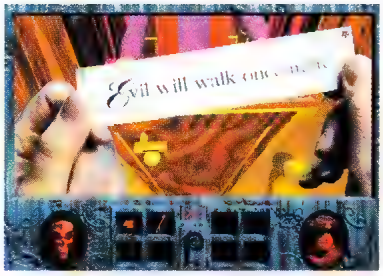
The interface itself is primarily hot-spot based, meaning that you move the mouse pointer across the screen until it turns red over certain objects. When it turns red, it means that the object can then be clicked on to either study or gather, simplifying things tremendously. An easy inventory system allows for quick item storage as well as usage. The downside is that the puzzles are quite effortless for the most part, largely due to the hot-spot interface, which makes problem-solving very easy.

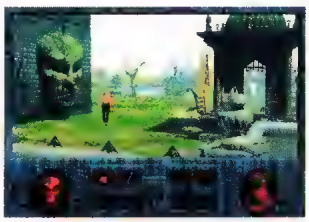
Aside from the acting and overall game, the plot itself is mostly B-movie material. As mentioned, an evil presence inhabits the house, and it's up to you (Adrienne) to get rid of it. Accompanying the B-movie aspect are some startlingly gory scenes (head-cleaving, etc.). For those who wish to play the game without the gore, Sierra sensibly included a censor option that skips over the gory sequences. At least there aren't any sorority babes in their underwear running away from a murderous psycho.

Adding to the horrific quality of the game is the save game system—or lack thereof. Basically, it uses a bookmark, allowing you to save in one place at any given time. The problem is that, when you die, so does your bookmark. The bookmark feels more like more playtime forced upon you than anything else.

The game itself progresses from chapter to chapter, with a total of seven chapters. While this keeps *Phantasmagoria* on a linear path, the actual chapters themselves have a fair, but not overwhelming, amount of freedom in course of actions.

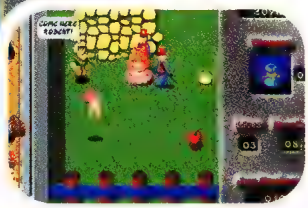
Those craving a darker turn more along the lines of *The 7th Guest* should enjoy *Phantasmagoria*, although *Phantasmagoria* is much easier overall. But be warned: It isn't for everyone. The graphic violence (which can be skipped) and even a very disturbing rape scene (with no actual nudity shown) clearly spell out "adults only." Ms. Williams has succeeded at showing that she can make games that aren't so nice. How nice of her.





capsule reviews

by Ron Dulin



Power Pete

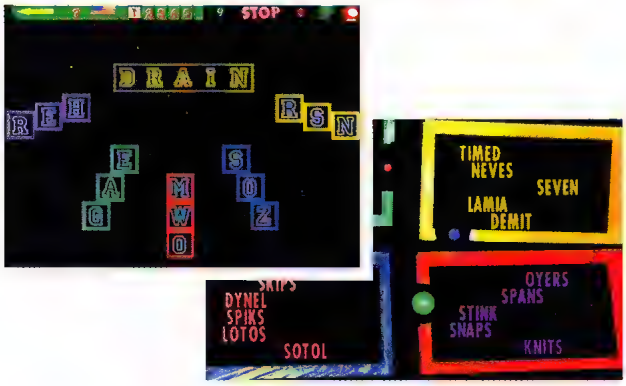
Price: N/A Genre: Action
Publisher: MacPlay
Telephone: 800.969.4263 System: Mac CD-ROM
Overall Rating: 8

Reminiscent of the 16-bit classic *Zombies Ate My Neighbors*, *Power Pete* places you in the combat boots of a Rambo-esque action figure. With an arsenal of toy weapons, you must rescue some fuzzy bunnies who are trapped in a toy store gone amuck. The funniest part of this game is Pete's mechanized voiced shouting things like "Eat my Dust!" and "Get over here Rodent!" while he's blasting evil Chocolate Bunnies, menacing Toy Soldiers and a never-ending stream of equally silly adversaries. Highly recommended for those with a taste for mindless fun.

Magic Carpet Plus

Price: $54.95 Genre: Action Publisher: Electronic Arts
Telephone: 800.245.4525
System: IBM PC CD Overall Rating: 9

Magic Carpet Plus combines the original *Magic Carpet* with the more recent *Hidden Worlds* add-on, making it a nice way for the uninitiated to see what they've been missing. If you already own the game, this is nothing new. If you don't, you have my heartfelt apologies. Now go and make your life a whole lot better by picking this up. *And* you'll get the bonus of decent box art with *Magic Carpet Plus*, instead of the cheesy photo that adorned the original.



Merriam-Webster's Word War Five

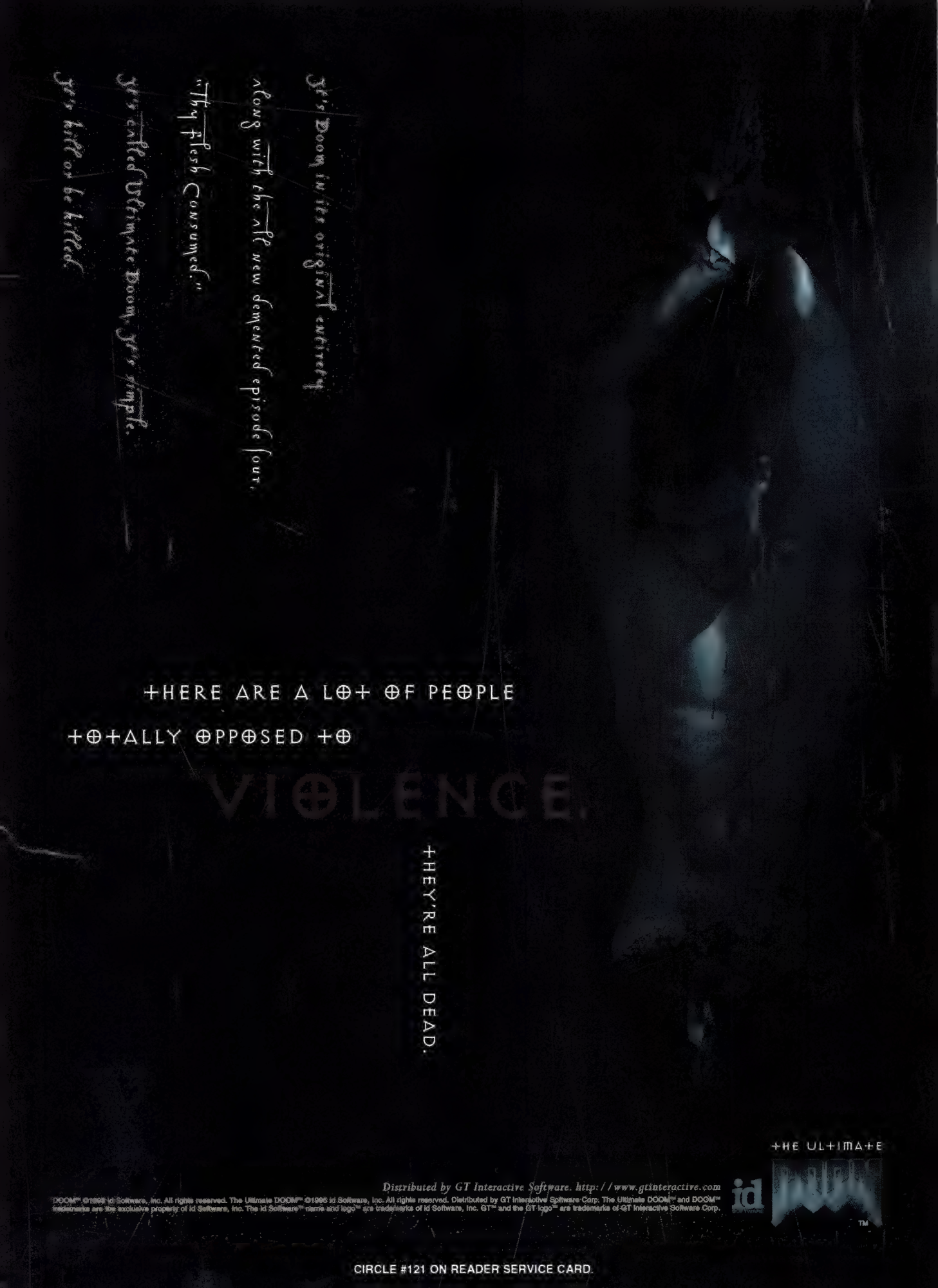
Price: $29.95 Genre: Puzzle Publisher: Millennium
Telephone: 800.892.6848
System: IBM PC CD Overall Rating: 7

Five unique word games for *Windows* (see, now isn't the title funny?), which range from the merely hard to the antagonistically impossible. Actually, a few of the games are quite easy at first, but these are exceptions to the rule. *WW5* will be heaven for wordsmiths and crossword puzzle buffs, but the vocabularistically impaired will definitely want to pass. Still, it's a lot more fun than studying for the GRE, and some of the puzzles—especially "Odd One Out," in which you must locate a dissimilar word from a group—are incredibly addictive.

Ishar 3: The Seven Gates of Infinity

Price: N/A Genre: FRPG
Publisher: ReadySoft Telephone: 905.475.4801
System: IBM PC CD Overall Rating: 5

Ahh, fantasy role-playing games. Either you love 'em or you hate 'em. If you love 'em, you may want to check out *Ishar 3*, but be warned—it has nothing new to offer the genre. The character building is very simplistic and the game play feels more like *The Bard's Tale* than more recent benchmarks like Bethesda's *The Elder Scrolls: Arena*. If you hate RPGs, well, this sure ain't gonna change your mind, unless of course you have a soft spot for half-orcs with names that sound like obscure Russian authors.


It's Doom in its original encircled
along with the all new demented episode four,
"Thy Flesh Consumed."
It's called Ultimate Doom. It's simple.
It's kill or be killed.
+HERE ARE A L⊕+ ⊕F PE⊕PLE
+⊕+ALLY ⊕PP⊕SED +⊕
VIOLENCE.
+HEY'RE ALL DEAD.
+HE UL+IMA+E
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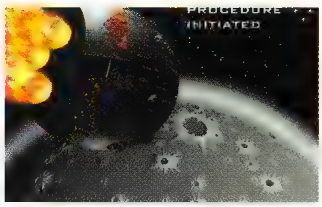
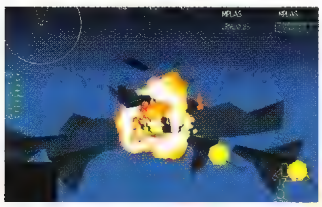




MechWarrior 2:
31st Century Combat

Activision for IBM PC CD

CHEAT, SECRET MECHS AND EASTER EGGS

Your last full salvo of long-range missiles decimates the distant Nova's torso, reducing it to a pile of molten metal. Suddenly, a Summoner jets over the nearest hill as you whip your turret sideways, freely letting loose with your ultra cannon and lasers. Legless, the Summoner topples into a midst of flames, exploding into ashes. Wiping back the sweat, you turn to the next pair of approaching mechs—a Rifleman and Direwolf.

Smiling grimly, you activate full guns, only to realize you're left with just a pair of paltry lasers. The enemy mechs decide to give you some of their ammo—the hard way. Yet you fight, using your virtual peashooter against their cannons and missiles, for to embrace cowardice is a fate far worse than death. Your mech shakes violently, hammered by lasers and machine gun fire, searing a leg off. Time slows as you watch several PPCs and missiles heading directly at you. Your mind wanders momentarily—have I somehow dishonored my clan? Did I really deserve this? Should I have used the ammo cheat?

Fortunately, the designers of Activision's *MechWarrior 2* know that all is not necessarily fair in war. Thus, they have included a multitude of tactical secrets (cheats) to help counter those hard-core missions that you just can't seem to beat without some form of Godly intervention.

Preparing for Battle

The following is a list of cheat codes that can only be activated during the actual missions. Ranging from infinite ammo all the way to turning your heat accumulation off, you're sure to find them useful in combat. Be sure to hold down the **Shift-Ctrl-Alt** keys while you type out the different cheats, otherwise they won't work.

Shift-Ctrl-Alt-CIA: Replenishes all weapons, giving you a full deck to play with when the stakes are high.

Shift-Ctrl-Alt-COLDMISER: Are you overheating your mech too much? Well, here's the solution, which turns off heat buildup, allowing you to fire and jump to your heart's content.

Shift-Ctrl-Alt-XRAY: Similar to image enhancement, except XRAY adds the ability to see through objects (including mountains) to see mechs behind them.

Shift-Ctrl-Alt-BLORB: Allows your mech to jump into a phone booth and come out as Supermech, completely indestructible.

Shift-Ctrl-Alt-ENOLAGAY: Whatever object you have targeted will be immediately nuked—and I mean *nuked*. Do not use at close range, or you'll join your target's demise.

Shift-Ctrl-Alt-MIGHTYMOUSE: Lets you watch all the original Mighty Mouse cartoons in order—just kidding. Gives you unlimited jump jet fuel.

Shift-Ctrl-Alt-LAIRDO: A useful cheat that allows you to command other mechs, assault vehicles or dropships in the area. Great for getting that extra help when the going gets tough.

Shift-Ctrl-Alt-MICHELIN: These mechs have balls—lots of 'em, in fact, thanks to this odd code.

Shift-Ctrl-Alt-TINKERBELL: Turns on a free-floating camera that stays fixed at one location. Press C to turn this mode off.

Shift-Ctrl-Alt-TLOFRONT: Changes the chase camera position for your mech.

Shift-Ctrl-Alt-MEEPMEEP: Enables time compression.

Shift-Ctrl-Alt-UNMEEPMEEP: Disables time compression—surprise!

Shift-Ctrl-Alt-HANGAROUND: Tired of being booted out without being able to gloat over the smoldering wreckage of enemy mechs? Well, now you can hang around as long as you want.

Shift-Ctrl-Alt-ICANTHACKIT: Tired of gloating? Enter this code to exit the mission.

Easter in Mechland

You won't find any bunnies hopping around in the world of metal machines, but you can discover some of their Easter eggs. During a mission, simultaneously type **Shift-Ctrl-Alt-DORCSCO** to hatch yet another Easter egg. You'll temporarily exit the mission while a list of the various designers (as well as this charming photograph—my, they have big heads now!) appears, allowing you to select them individually and read some words of "wisdom."

Secret Mechs Revealed

Those Elementals are a lot like mosquitoes. They're small, hard to see, annoying and, when there's a swarm of them, they can be real pests. But then again, you're probably just jealous because you can't be one. Well, you can stop your sniveling, because now you can be a mosquito—er, Elemental.

First enter the **Trials of Grievance** and **click** on **Star Config**. Then **click** on your current **callsign**, delete it and type in **Hobbes** (must be case-specific, or it won't work). Go ahead and choose **Mech Lab** after changing your callsign to Hobbes, scroll through the mechs and voilà!—there's the Elemental. But that's not all; there's also the spiderlike Tarantula mech. And, in a later patch, you'll even be able to access the Battlemaster this way. Now you can have your cake and eat it too.

Full Throttle

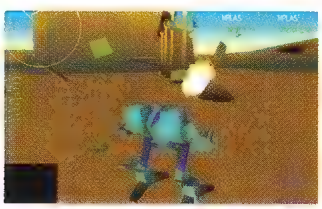
Highway Hunter

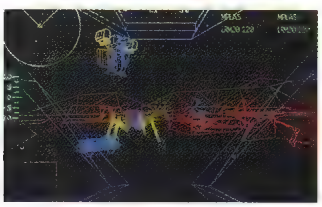
Lode Runner

MechWarrior 2

Slipstream 5000

Star Trek: TNG





Star Trek: TNG

"A Final Unity"

Spectrum HoloByte for IBM PC CD

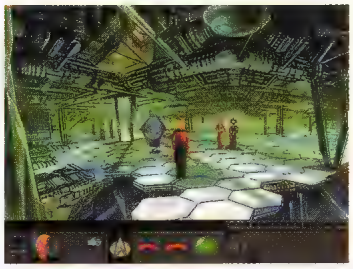
DOING THE WARP WALK

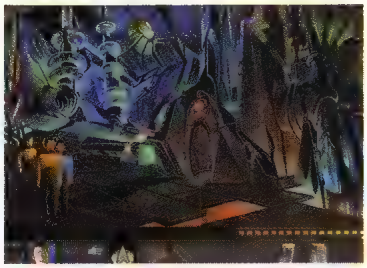
If there's one thing you're bound to notice in *A Final Unity*, it's that the various *Star Trek* characters are all animated realistically, walking smoothly from place to place. This is due to the fact that all of the characters put some serious mileage on their footwear as they planet hop across the universe trying to discover and complete their mission. Besides becoming tedious, there are timed events in the game that require speed, and not the

ever-so-casual approach of our Federation friends.

Luckily, there's a way around this—the warp walk. By simply holding down the **shift key** while having the crew members walk to a destination, you'll notice a drastic improvement in speed. This makes those numerous walks back and forth between different areas take much less time and allows you to concentrate on the task at hand, not just staying awake.

The shift speed-up also allows for you to easily bypass the timed walk events on planets. This is most noticeable toward the end of the game, where you need to temporarily disable three sensors and get past them before they go back on-line. A shift in pace will make this minor puzzle a breeze.



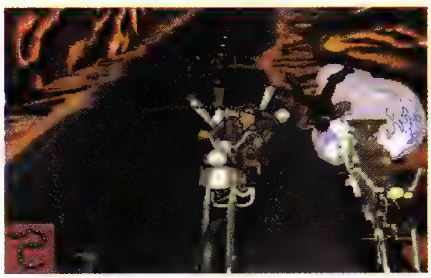


Full Throttle

LucasArts for IBM PC CD

SUCKER PUNCH

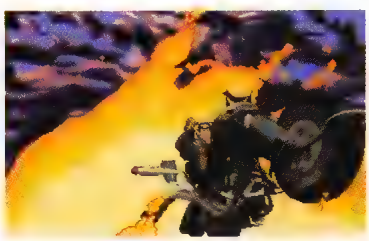
Ben's had better days. Accused of murder, he's out trying to find the real culprit, clear his name and, hopefully, ride off into the sunset. You've been doing your best to help Ben out, and just when things have been looking up, you find yourself stuck at Mine Road getting beaten off your bike again and again by rival biker gangs. Except, Ben has something up his sleeve to help you out if this arcade-like portion of the game is giving



you a flat tire.

During the fisticuffs with rival bikers, hit **Shift-V** repeatedly. Ben will pull out some of his dirtier moves to make quick work of his opposition, saving your sanity in the progress. Sometimes you may need to hit **Shift-V** a few times to unseat your opponent, but it won't take long. Then you can be back on your merry way of solving puzzles.

continued on page 84



Win up to 15 Free Computer Games!

Computer Player Reader Survey Contest

In order to serve our readers better, we would like to ask a few questions about yourself, what kind of games you like and what you think about Computer Player. But, we don't want you to go through all that trouble without having the chance to win something. Three prizes will be awarded by random drawing. First Prize (15 computer games), Second Prize (10 computer games), Third Prize (5 computer games). In order to be eligible, contestants must complete the following survey in its *entirety* and send it in or a copy of it (i.e., if you don't want to cut up this copy), to the address below.

1. The following items appeared in issues of Computer Player. We'd like to know roughly how interesting you've found each piece to be. Please rate each piece in the following categories: Good ❒ Average ❒ Bad ❒

1 Communications:	G ❒	A ❒	B ❒
2 Newsnet:	G ❒	A ❒	B ❒
3 Shareware Spotlight:	G ❒	A ❒	B ❒
4 Point of Reference:	G ❒	A ❒	B ❒
5 Over the Line:	G ❒	A ❒	B ❒
6 Cover Feature:	G ❒	A ❒	B ❒
7 Previews:	G ❒	A ❒	B ❒
8 Reviews:	G ❒	A ❒	B ❒
9 Capsule Reviews:	G ❒	A ❒	B ❒
10 Cheat Mode:	G ❒	A ❒	B ❒
11 Game Strategies:	G ❒	A ❒	B ❒
12 Reboot:	G ❒	A ❒	B ❒

2. How many people, apart from yourself, are likely to read this copy of the magazine?
1 ❒ One
2 ❒ Two
3 ❒ Three
4 ❒ More than three people

3. On average, about how much of Computer Player do you read or look at (excluding advertisements)?
1 ❒ Less than a quarter
2 ❒ About a quarter to a half
3 ❒ About half to three quarters
4 ❒ More than three quarters
5 ❒ Cover to cover

4. What will you do with this copy of Computer Player once you've finished reading it?
1 ❒ Keep it for reference
2 ❒ Pass it on to someone else
3 ❒ Throw it away

5. Please rate Computer Player.
1 ❒ Excellent
2 ❒ Good
3 ❒ Fair
4 ❒ Poor

6. What system/hardware do you own? Check all that apply.
1 ❒ IBM PC/MS-DOS Compatible
2 ❒ Macintosh or Compatible
3 ❒ CD-ROM Drive
4 ❒ Sound Board with Speakers
5 ❒ Joystick or Similar Device
6 ❒ Modem

7. What system/hardware do you plan on purchasing within the next year.
1 ❒ IBM PC/MS-DOS Compatible
2 ❒ Macintosh or Compatible
3 ❒ CD-ROM Drive
4 ❒ Sound Board with Speakers
5 ❒ Joystick or Similar Device
6 ❒ Modem
7 ❒ System Upgrade (Motherboard, Hard Drive or Memory)

8. Do you currently use an on-line service or have direct access to the Internet?
1 ❒ Yes 2 ❒ No

9. If no, do you intend to go on-line in the next year?
1 ❒ Yes 2 ❒ No

10. If yes, which on-line service(s) do you intend to use?
1 ❒ Direct Internet access
2 ❒ America Online
3 ❒ CompuServe
4 ❒ Delphi
5 ❒ Genie
6 ❒ Imagination Network
7 ❒ Prodigy
8 ❒ Microsoft's MSN
9 ❒ Apple's eWorld

11. Do you think that all the excitement about the Internet is hype and that it's just another passing fad.
1 ❒ Yes 2 ❒ No

12. How many hours a week do you play computer games?
1 ❒ Less than 5
2 ❒ 5-10
3 ❒ 10-20
4 ❒ More than 20

13. What types of games do you like most?
1 ❒ Action
2 ❒ Adult
3 ❒ Adventure
4 ❒ Strategy
5 ❒ Simulation
6 ❒ Sports
7 ❒ Role-Playing
8 ❒ All/No Preference

14. Which types of software do you intend to buy or upgrade on in the next year?
1 ❒ Accounting/Spreadsheet
2 ❒ Art/Rendering
3 ❒ Business/Presentation
4 ❒ Word Processing
5 ❒ Communications/On-line
7 ❒ Desk Top Publishing
8 ❒ Education/Edutainment
9 ❒ Music
10 ❒ Programming

15. Where do you buy your software and/or hardware? (check all that apply)
1 ❒ Computer dealer
2 ❒ Department store
3 ❒ Discount store
4 ❒ Electronics store
5 ❒ Mail order
6 ❒ Software store
7 ❒ Toy store

16. About how much money a year in computer games do you spend?
1 ❒ less than $100
2 ❒ $100-$200
3 ❒ $300-$500
4 ❒ $500-$1000
4 ❒ Over $1000

17. How many games a year do you purchase?
1 ❒ 1-6
2 ❒ 7-12
3 ❒ 13-20
4 ❒ 21-30
5 ❒ More than 30

18. How many CD-ROM games do you intend to purchased in the next year?
1 ❒ 1-6
2 ❒ 7-12
3 ❒ 13-20
4 ❒ 21-30
5 ❒ More than 30

19. What computer-game magazines do you read? Check all that apply.
1 ❒ Computer Gaming World
2 ❒ Computer Game Review
3 ❒ PC Gamer
4 ❒ Strategy Plus

20. Are you...
1 ❒ Male 2 ❒ Female

21. How old are you?
1 ❒ Under 18
2 ❒ 18-24
3 ❒ 25-34
4 ❒ 35-44
5 ❒ Over 45

22. What is your employment status?
1 ❒ Student
2 ❒ Not working
3 ❒ Part-time employed
4 ❒ Full-time employed

23. What is your level of education?
1 ❒ Less than High School
2 ❒ High School Graduate
3 ❒ Some College
4 ❒ College Graduate
5 ❒ Graduate School
6 ❒ Current Student

24. What category best describes your current employment.
1 ❒ Service Industry
2 ❒ Civil Servant
3 ❒ Professional
4 ❒ Professional/Management
5 ❒ Military
6 ❒ Student
7 ❒ Other

25. Please estimate your family's annual household income.
1 ❒ under $20,000
2 ❒ $20,000-$39,999
3 ❒ $40,000-$69,999
4 ❒ $70,000-$99,999
5 ❒ More than $100,000

Carefully print all information legibly so that we may notify you in the event that you win. Entry must be received no later than November 30, 1995. Remember, form must be completely filled out to be eligible.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
_____
CITY/STATE/ZIP _____
PHONE _____

Send your entry to:

Computer Player Magazine
Attn: Editorial Reader Survey
8484 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300
Beverly Hills, CA 90211

Or fax it to: **213.655.2339**

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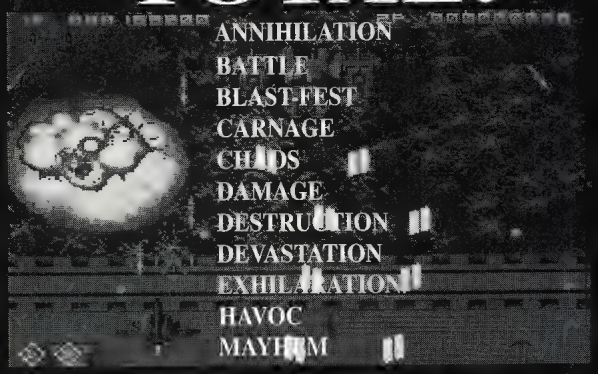

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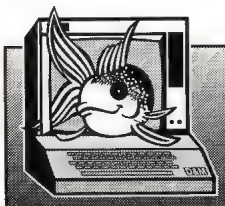

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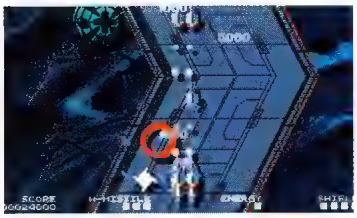
Highway Hunter

Epic Megagames for IBM PC



FREE BEER

No, you won't actually get any free beer—life's hard. However, if you find the roads in *Highway Hunter* getting a little too hot to handle, this will be just as refreshing.

First, make sure that you're in *Highway Hunter*'s main directory. Next, type **START**, then hit your space bar and enter any of the following cheat codes.

FREE: Supplies your automobile with all the weapons you'll need to perform the necessary roadwork.

BEER: Keeps your energy high so your laser weapons don't ever run low.

SKIP: Bypasses the opening intro, jumping you right to the main menu smoothly and efficiently.

L#: Allows you to specify the desired starting level. For example, to begin the game at Level 3, you would simply type **START L3** and press the Enter key.

Remember that the codes must follow the **START.EXE** file in the main directory. So, to use **FREE**, simply type **START FREE** from the main *Highway Hunter* directory. Be sure to leave a space between **START** and the code you wish to use, otherwise, the code won't work (nor will *Highway Hunter*, for that matter). And when you find yourself blowing away baddies left, right and above you, remember, you owe it all to **FREE BEER**.

Lode Runner

Sierra for IBM PC/MS-DOS/Windows

CHEAT CODES

Back in the early '80s, a relatively simple, yet extremely addicting, game had a captive running furiously around collecting gold while evading evil guards. This simple game was known as *Lode Runner*, and, like most old great movies, a remake was made for the '90s with a few extra bells and whistles. Among these additions is a cheat code that allows you to play as one of the monks.

While the new *Lode Runner* is distributed in both MS-DOS and *Windows* formats, different methods of accessing the monk mode are accessible through the two versions. Starting with the MS-DOS version, perform the following actions.

During the game, hit **CTRL-F3** simultaneously to activate monk mode. You can then control the monk by the following codes: **T**, **Y**, **U** or **G**, **H**, **I** or **B**, **N**, **M**. Pressing **TAB** will use the current monk.

In the *Windows* version, first click to the upper-left corner area at the main *Lode Runner* menu, then press **CTHULU** (for version 1.2) or **YOG** (for version 1.3). Confirmation of the code can be heard through a "gong" sound effect. Like the MS-DOS version, use **T**, **Y**, **U** or **G**, **H**, **I** or **B**, **N**, **M** to control the monk's movements, while pressing **TAB** to select the current monk.

Full Throttle

Highway Hunter

Lode Runner

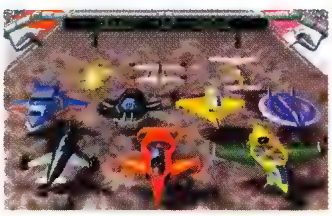
MechWarrior 2

Slipstream 5000

Star Trek: TNG

Slipstream 5000

Gremlin Interactive for IBM PC CD



CHEAT CODES

You're on the final lap, with three other racers closing fast. Lasers sear past as your opponents close in their more maneuverable and faster ships. You swerve to avoid more incoming fire, but when you pull up, you find you're now in fourth place.

Fortunately, there's a gold mine waiting to be tapped that will allow you to join the big boys with their fast hovercars. No more catching your opponents' tailwind; there's no room for second place.

So relax, there's still hope for you with the refinery. No, not *working* at a refinery—using the cheat code **REFINERY**. At the main game menu, enter the word **REFINERY** and you'll find that you've suddenly become anonymously sponsored in a very big way.

With all that money, you could just retire—but you know you were born to tear through the Grand Canyon at speeds in excess of 400 m.p.h., leaving your opponents breathing your exhaust.

'DESIGNER BODIES' 20 girls in one, and if you can discover what she likes to wear, you'll see and hear more of each one of these three beautiful women. Over 75 screens and 3 girls, each screen is a different special effect, a high quality digital painting. There are 6 short animations, 1 morph, and 3 live videos. **CD $36**

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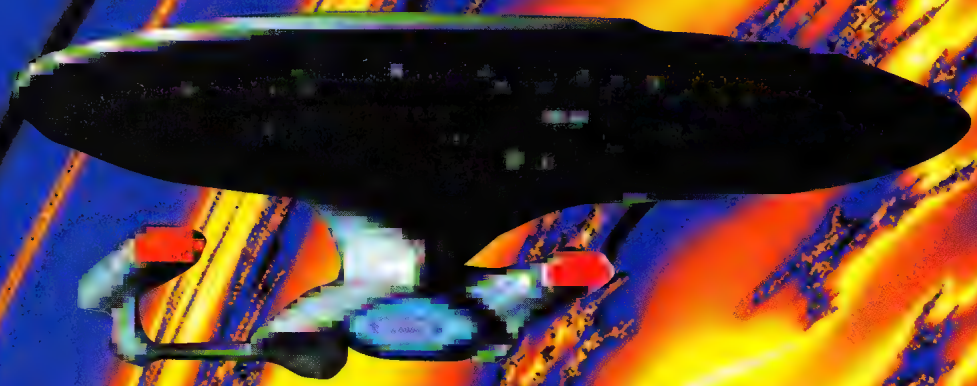


Strategy Guide

Interplay for IBM PC CD

by Kevin J. McCann

You've watched the show. You know the characters. And you've always wanted to take command of the *Enterprise* yourself. Now you've finally been given the chance to make it so, but you're stumbling through the universe trying to solve a gigantic mystery without even a small clue.

Fortunately, as if in anticipation of your aimless wandering, Star Fleet has asked me to assist you in deciphering *A Final Unity*. Being an Empath of notable reputation, I've already found the solution and will generously provide a step-by-step guide so that you too may prove victorious in your quest.

While the guide serves as a direct path to completing *A Final Unity*, you're encouraged to talk to everyone and experiment beyond the guide as well. I'll be beaming aboard now.

Encountering and Countering Captain Pentara

After encountering Captain Pentara in her Garidian Warbird, **ask Data** for his **opinion** regarding the refugees. Follow through with **blocking** the **Warbird's tractor beam**.

Open a **channel** to Captain **Pentara**,

informing her that the *Enterprise* has every right to interfere due to the Warbird's presence in the Neutral Zone. End the conversation with **offering to overlook her violation if she returns to Garidian Space immediately.**

Select the **conference room** and have a thorough discussion with **T'Bak**, asking all possible questions. Your final response should be, **"This could be an intriguing quest."** Picard will automatically order the ship to Horst III.

Emergency at Cymkoe IV

As you proceed to Horst III, a distress message from the Mertens Orbital

Research Station will appear. **Engage maximum warp** toward the **Mertens Orbital Station**, saving Horst III for later. Once you've arrived at the station, go to the **turbolift** and select **transporter**, choosing a minimum of **Riker, Crusher** and **LaForge.**

Upon beaming down to the station, immediately **walk** through the **left door. Head over** to the **woman** trapped under the broken power conduit. **Switch**

to **Crusher** and **use** the **tricorder** on the **woman**.

Switch to **Riker** and **talk** with **LaForge**. Use the **phaser** on the **data transfer line** at **the lowest possible phaser setting. Use** the **tricorder** on the **data transfer line**, then **walk** back to the **transporter room** where you first arrived.

Use the **transporter controls, select transporter lock** and **lock** the **transporter** on the **data cable. Energize** the transporters, beaming the

damaged cable into the room and off the woman, then **walk** back to **her. Switch** back to **Crusher** and use the **medkit** on the injured **woman**.

Talk to **Dr. Benyt**, questioning her entirely. After gaining the **security code, walk** to the **room on the right** and **use** the **turbolift** in the back. **Select Administration** and **use** the **control panel** on the right side of the room. **Select Emergency Systems** then **use Power Redirect** to stabilize the station. **Exit** the panel, **walk** back to the **turbolift** and choose **Engineering**.

An alien vessel seems to be drawing on the reactor, so don't cross its path. **Proceed** to the **Engineering Lab #4** to the right. **Switch** to **LaForge** and have

him **use** the **control panel**. First, **choose Initiate Temporary Shutdown** on the lower-left side of the panel, followed by **pushing** the **Shutdown Group Number Three** control button.

Picard will then inform the Away Team that the alien vessel has left the station, and Geordi's appropriate reply should be, **"I'd like to track it down, but the station isn't stable yet. See how long you can track it."**

Look at the **items** sitting on the trays to the right side of the room. Have Geordi **pick up** both the **wave converter** and **inverter coupling** found on the

middle shelf. **Walk out** of the room, then **proceed** to the **core control room** found to the left.

When **speaking** with **Dr. Griems**, it's imperative to let him know that **Geordi** is a **fellow engineer**, otherwise he won't talk to you. Question him thoroughly, agreeing to assist him.

Walk to the **right** and mosey over to the **damaged power coupling. Use** the **inverter coupling** on the **hole in the casing**. Then **use** the **wave con-**

verter on the **hole in the casing**

Mertens Station is now safe and operative, and the Away Team can return to the *Enterprise*.

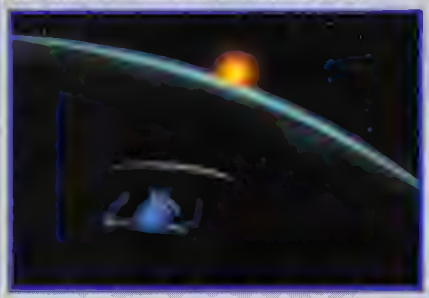
Shanok

You've saved the station, but there's no time to lose. **Set a course** for **Horst III**. Upon arrival, **use Comms** to contact **Shanok**, asking him all possible ques-

tions. The last request should be **asking to beam down**, which Shanok will politely refuse.

It's a Jungle out There

Use Comms to contact **Admiral Redderick**. **Follow** the **lamb thread** and **agree** to **assist**, setting course for Moriatsa. Once you've arrived, **open** a **channel** to **Constable Liiksze** and



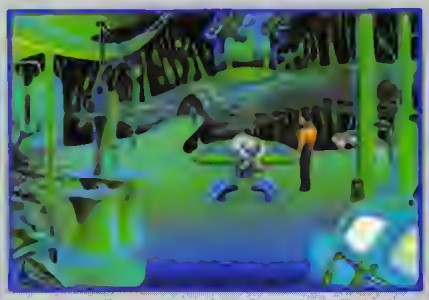
agree that your Away Team will not bring phasers. **Select** the **turbolift** and head to the **transporter room**. Your team should have at least **Data** and **Crusher**.

After beaming down, have **Data speak** with the **Constable**, **insisting** that you need to have **access** to the **Preserve**. Once you have access, **walk** to the **doorway** on the **left** and **proceed** to the **laboratory** in the distance.

Pick up the **three carcasses** and

use them each individually on first the **Biotable**, then the **Sonic Scanner**. Now **use** your **tricorder** on the **damaged computer**. You'll need to open a channel to Trader Melas, so **use** your **tricorder** on the **Comm Port** and **select Trader Melas**, asking all the possible questions.

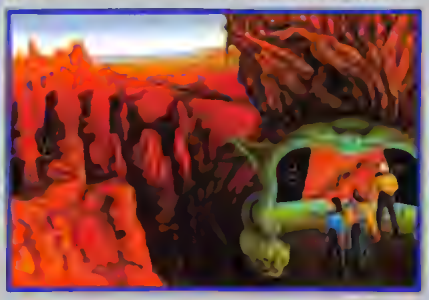
Head back to the **Constable**, **talk** with **her** and question her thoroughly. Following the questioning, **move** back to the **laboratory** and **use** the **tricorder** on the **Comm Port** again, this time **selecting Consultant Lydia**. After asking all questions of the pompous



lydia, **walk** over to the three jellyfishlike **field units**, **placing** them in your **inventory**. **Use** your **tricorder** on each **field unit** to establish its environmental uses. On your way out, **pick up** the **Bioprobe** sitting on the left side of the Biotable.

Walk to the **entrance**, back to the **crossroads**, and head over to the **Shuttle Dock**. **Take** the **Microgenerator** and walk back to the **crossroads**, then proceed to the **Canyon Biotope**.

First activate the computer by placing the **Microgenerator** on the correspond-



ing **power slot**. **Use** the **rocky field unit** on the **caverns**, **pit** and, finally, the **crater**. Now **use** the **Bioprobe** on the **rocky field unit three times**, which should give you **three field samples**.

Retrieve the **Microgenerator** from the computer and walk back to the **crossroads**. **Proceed** to the **Bogforest Biotope**, put the **Microgenerator** in the computer's **power slot**, then **use** the **tropical field unit** on the **first tunnel**, **second tunnel**, **third tunnel** and **fourth tunnel**. As with before, then **use**

the **Bioprobe four times** on the **tropical field unit**, netting you **four more field samples**. **Get** the **Microgenerator** and go to the **path**. **Select Marine Biotope** now.

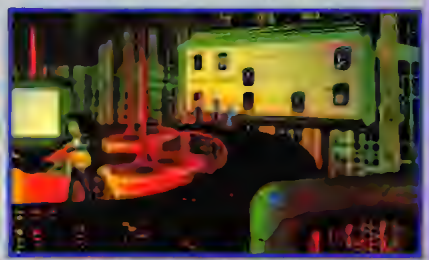
Once again, put the **Microgenerator** in the **power slot**. **Use** the **aquatic field unit** on all **four jelly corals**, then **use** the **Bioprobe four times** on the **aquatic field unit**, giving you the final **four field samples**. **Take** the **Microgenerator** from the **power port** and **walk** back to the **laboratory**.

You should have a total of **11 field samples** now from the three field units. **Use** all 11 **samples** on the **sonic scanner**—they'll disappear after use, making it easier on your inventory. After they have all been scanned, **use** the **tricorder** on the **Comm Port** to open a channel to **Healer Zzolas**, asking all possible questions.

Walk back to the **crossroads** and head over to the **Quarantine Shelter**. Have a thorough **conversation** with **Watcher Tzudan**. Following the chat, **return** back to the **Constable's Office** and **talk** with **her**. She will leave temporarily, then return. **Talk** with **Dr.**

Hyunh Foertsch when she appears from the right.

After talking with the good doctor, **proceed** to the **crossroads**, then the **Shuttle Dock**. **Hop** into the **shuttle** and go for a short ride. Upon arriving at the destination, use the **utilities trunk** and walk back to the entrance. **Back** at the **Quarantine Shelter**, **first use**



Console Two to activate the trap. Once the creature enters the collector, **use Console One** to close the gates. Last, but not least, use **Console Three** to seal the trap shut. Have a final **conversation** with **Dr. Hyunh-Foertsch** and then it's back to the *Enterprise*.

Pursuing Iydia

Speak with **T'Bak** once aboard the *Enterprise* again, then **set course** for **Joward III**. You've just missed Aramut, but you can catch him at the **Nigold System**. After reaching Aramut's ship, **lock phasers and raise shields** to get

Aramut's attention. **Threaten** to inform the Romulans of his smuggling activities in order to get Aramut's full cooperation. After Iydia is beamed aboard, **set a course** for **Shoniosho Epsilon VI** to Frigis.

The Battle of the Sects at Frigis

When the *Enterprise* reaches Frigis, attempt to **hail** the **planet**. After getting no response, **talk** to **Troi**. Then **talk** with **T'Bak**, allowing him to **hail** the **planet**. Wait for a little while, then **Chancellor Laraq** will open a channel with the *Enterprise*. Ask him all possible questions, and mention the **Garidian Refugees** aboard the ship. Laraq will then ask for some time to think, and will then agree to an Away Team.

Select the **turbolift** and then the **transporter room**. The party should consist of at least **Riker**, **Data** and **LaForge**. Beam down and have a thorough **conversation** with the **Chancellor**. Once he disappears, **walk** to the **desert** to the right, then **proceed** to the **pyramid**.

Speak with **Arch Rashon Nachyl**, then **walk** to the **Arch** and finally the **Gatekeeper** behind the Arch. **Talk** to the **Gatekeeper**, who will then deem whether you're worthy of entering or not by asking a series of random questions. The following are four of the questions as well as the appropriate replies.

Question One: Define your Prime Directive.

Answer One: The Prime Directive doesn't have a single definition.... Its interpretation depends on the circumstances.

Question Two: By what right are you here?

Answer Two: For all I know, we may

not have any right to be here.

Question Three: Who was the Lawgiver?

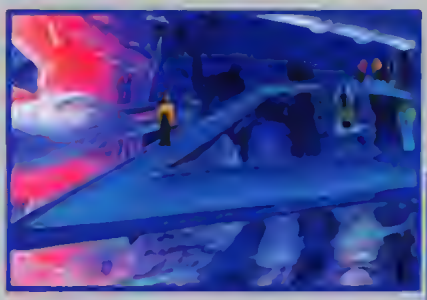
Answer Three: I've heard he was a great man, but I have no personal knowledge of him.

Question Four: Who are you?

Answer Four: Everyone plays so many roles in life, it is impossible to label them.

Once you finally satisfy the Gatekeeper, **walk** through the **door** into the chamber beyond. **Switch** to **LaForge**, having him **tricorder** the **sign**, the **panel** and the **stasis field**. **Walk** back to the **landing area**, **switch** to **Riker** and **talk** with **Chancellor Laraq**.

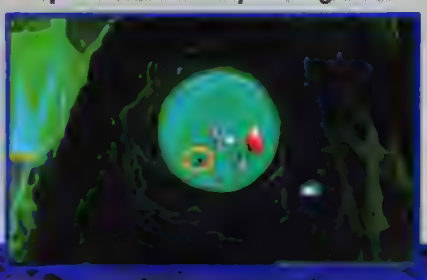
With the Garidian/Chodak translator, **head back** to the **chamber** past the



Gatekeeper. **Use** the **tricorder** on the **sign** again, then **use** the **panel**. After Aelont has been freed, **speak** with **him** and **accept** the **talisman key**. **Walk** out the **door**, back to the **Hall of Triumph**, and head over to the **vault** in the **rock**.

Use the **Thermacode key** on the **vault**, **taking** the **Golden Ring**, **the Staff with an Orb** on the end and the **Yoke-Shaped device**. **Exit** the **vault**, **head back** to the **landing area** and **enter** the **closest pyramid**.

Speak with **Stamblyr** and **agree** to



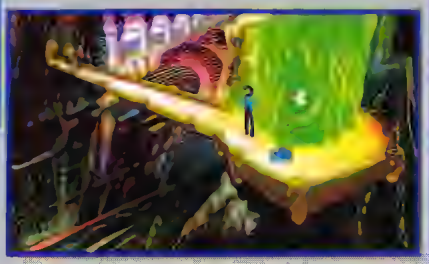
hear their songs. **Get** the **orchestron** and **talk** to **Stamblyr** again, asking all the questions. **Give Stamblyr** the

Golden Ring and **get** the next **orchestron**. Have **Geordi** then **use** the **Yoke-Shaped device** on the **instrument**. Stamblyr will then give you the third **orchestron**. **Exit** the **temple**, **switch** to

Riker and **walk** to the **far pyramid**.

Talk with **Madia the Gynarch** thoroughly, then **give the Staff** to her. **Ask Madia** what's behind the force field. **Walk** to the **transporter pad** and use the **second orchestron—Traveling Music—**to activate the transporter pad.

Once inside, **use** the **Watch Your Step** orchestron to **rearrange** the **floor tiles**. **Get** the **close orchestron** on the left side. Each orchestron you pick up rearranges the floor tiles to a particular pattern. The goal is to reach the back door, but the only way you can do that is by picking up all four orchestrons, noting their individual patterns. The key is to



make sure that, when you use a different orchestron, you use one that doesn't make the floor beneath you vanish. Since each orchestron has a set pattern, it's just a matter of a little effort to learn where to stand when switching between orchestrons and reaching the back door. Don't worry—falling won't kill you.

After reaching the back door, **use** the **tricorder** on the **niche** and the **blue talisman**. They both have the same frequency, so **put** the **blue talisman** into the **niche** and **enter** the **room** beyond. You've finally found the **Fifth Scroll**. **Take** the **scroll** and **beam up** to the *Enterprise*.

Back aboard the *Enterprise*, you'll have your second encounter with

Captain Pentara. **Agree** to **allow Avakar** to **speak** with his **mother**. Pentara will then take the refugees back to Garid.

The Romulans are Coming! The Romulans are Coming!

Once word of the Romulan invasion reaches the *Enterprise*, **use Comms** to **contact Starfleet**. Worf will manually route the transmission. Wait for a brief time and contact will be established with Admiral Reddreck. The *Enterprise* is then ordered to the Goldur Delta System.

Use Comms to speak with **Commander Chan**. Romulan Warbirds are heading for the Paxanona System. **Agree to the mission** and **set course** for **Communications Relay 543**. When the Romulans appear, **choose** to **engage** them. They'll choose to flee, **so let them go**.

Contact Commander Chan again and inform her of what happened. She'll give you a second mission to locate the USS *Ayers* in the Beremar System. **Proceed** immediately, and once you **reach** the **Warbirds**, **delegate tactical control** to **Worf** and **engineering** to **LaForge**. After destroying the Romulans, **contact Commander Chan** and **accept the mission** to work with the **Klingon Bird of Prey**. **Set course** for **Goldur Epsilon**.

Upon reaching Klingon **Captain Ky'Dra** of the Bortas, ask all possible questions of him. Then **use Comms** to **contact Commander Chan**, who will relieve you of any further duty assignments from her.

For Better or for Horst III

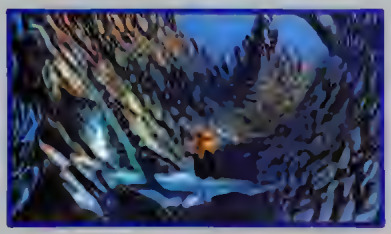
A message will appear from your old friend Chancellor Laraq of Frigis, who needs your help in defending against a Romulan Warbird. **Proceed** directly to **Frigis** and **destroy** the **Warbird**. After destroying the Warbird, **beam down** and

speak with **Laraq**, getting both the **Isolinear Rod** and the **Rod Programmer**. **Use** the **communicator** and **beam up**.

When the **alien vessels** attack the *Enterprise*, have **Worf** handle the **enemies**. It's a good idea to save beforehand, though, as the fight is tricky. After the fight, **set** a **course** for **Horst III** to speak with **Shanok**. He's gone, but a message buoy will give you some information.

Select the **turbolift** and **transporter room**, using a minimum of **Picard** and **LaForge**. Beam down to Horst III. **Use** the **tricorder** on the **rubble**, **set** the **phaser power** to **high** and **fire** at the **rubble** until it **disintegrates**. **Enter** the **passageway**.

Activate the **screen** by **using** the **Isolinear Rod** then the **Rod Programmer** on the rod. **Use** the **tricorder** on the **screen image**, then **remove** the **rod**. **Exit** the **panel**, then **walk** to the **rear** of the site. Have either LaForge or Picard **use** the **tricorder** on the **instrument** and then the **mounting**.



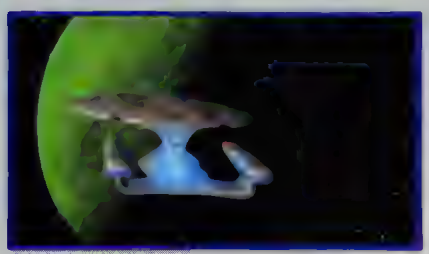
Walk back to the arrival site and **beam up** to the *Enterprise*.

Allanor

Speak with **Commander Data** and have him **report** the analysis on the Chodak artifacts. **Inform Starfleet**, then **set course** into the Neutral Zone and the planet **Allanor**. At **Allanor**, **use** the **turbolift** and **select transporter room**,

forming an Away Team consisting of **Picard**, **LaForge**, **Data** and **Carlstrom** and **beam down**.

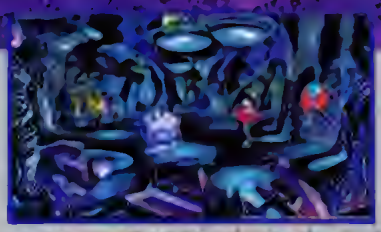
Select Picard and **use** the **tricorder** on both the **ventilation duct** and **seals**. **Set phaser** on a **high setting** and **shoot all three** of the **seals** until the ventilation duct opens. **Use** the **tricorder** on the **drone**, then **remove** the **Logic Inhibitor** from the drone. Once the drone activates, **walk** through the



ventilation duct.

Proceed to the **display panels** on the upper platform. **Switch** to **LaForge**, **activating** the panel by **using** the **Isolinear Rod** and **Rod Programmer**. **Choose Initialize System**, followed by **Active Facility**. **Click** on **System Log** and select **More**. **Choose Access Main Database**, then **select Dispatch Repair Unit**. **Remove** the **rod** and **walk** to the **room** to the right.

As soon as the **maintenance droid**



appears, **use** the **tricorder** on the **droid** and **select scan**. **Pick up** the piece of **metal** on the floor. **Proceed** to the **door** to the far rear of the room.

Have **Geordi** walk to the door and **use** the **tricorder** on the **door**. **Use** the **Logic Inhibitor** on the **door circuits** to keep it closed, and as soon as a droid stops at the door, **use** the **tricorder** on

the **droid** to **deactivate** the **droid**. **Remove** the **Logic Inhibitor** and **walk** through the **door**.

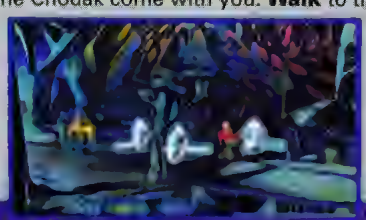
Activate the **panel** to the left by **using** the **Isolinear Rod** and **Rod Programmer**. **Select Station On Line** and then **select Power On**. **Remove** the **Isolinear Rod** and **scan** the **platform**, **capacitator** and **floor panel** with the **tricorder**. **Reactivate** the **panel using** the **Isolinear Rod** and **Rod**

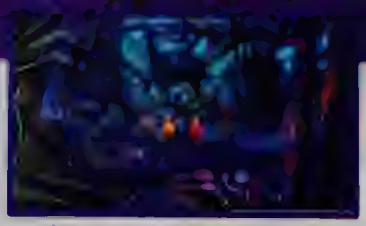
Programmer yet again, and **select Power Off**.

Exit the **panel** and watch the capacitator. Wait for the vertical lights to drop until the last **two** or **three lights** are **lit**, then **shoot** the **capacitator** with the **phaser**. **Select Picard** and **speak** with the **alien** that arrives. **Walk** to the **opening** following the aliens.

Speak with the **Chodak Leader** on the far right and **claim** to be on an **archaeological expedition**. Let them know your **mission** is **peaceful**, but **lie** about **not having the Isolinear Rod**, informing the Chodak that you haven't found any such rods but that you would like to **research** the **Hall of Records**.

Tell the **Chodak** that the party has **expertise** in **data encryption** and that, perhaps, you can do it without a rod. Then **insist** on **going alone**—don't let the Chodak come with you. **Walk** to the





passage.

Switch to **LaForge** and use the **tricorder** on the **panel**. **Use** the **panel** and **click** on the **top far left button** for the horizontal lights, and the **very bottom light** for the **vertical lights**. Then go to the right of the panel to the **delay bar** and **click** on it. When you see the red bars forming vertically down, **exit immediately** and have **LaForge walk** directly under the **transporter** with the rest of the Away Team.

After being transported to your new destination, **walk** to the **Archways** in the background. Then **proceed** to the **room** to the **right**. **Use** the **tricorder** on both the **sensors** and **disrupter**. **Switch** to **Data** and **shoot one** of the **sensors**, then **use** the **tricorder** on that **same sensor**. This next part is timed, so try to be as efficient as possible.

Shoot all three sensors and **walk immediately** to the **door** under the **disrupter**. The sensors come back on-line after a little while, and, if they do, they'll stun whoever walks toward the door. Thus, it's important to shoot the three sensors quickly and then promptly walk to the door.

Proceed to the **obelisk** in the back. **Activate** the **pedestal using** the **Isolinear Rod** and **Rod Programmer**. **Immediately use** the **Tricorder** on the monitor **screen** to capture coordinate information. **Admiral Brodnack** of the Chodak Empire will surprise the party at this point, taking the rod for himself. After the Chodak exit, **use** the **panel** again and **use** the **tricorder** on the **new entries**—make sure everything that can be stored in the tricorder gets stored in the tricorder.

Exit the **room** with the Obelisk. Admiral Brodnack and other Chodak are still present, so wait until they leave before walking back up the stairs. Once you're back in the room with the **sensors** and **disrupter**, be sure to **repeat** the **three steps** before trying to exit. Promptly **shoot all three sensors** and quickly **move** to the **left room**. **Walk** back to the **transporter room** and have **LaForge activate** the **panel**.

Select the **far right light** on the top horizontal bar and the **middle light** on the vertical bar. **Initiate** the **delay bar**, then **get under** the **transporter** with the rest of the Away Team to be beamed out. **Walk** all the way back to where you **initially beamed in**, **deactivate** the **security droid** with the **tricorder**, then **hail** the *Enterprise* and **beam up**.

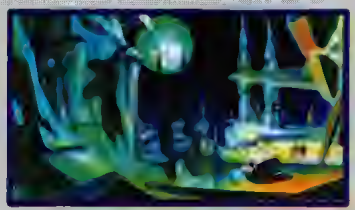
Once aboard the *Enterprise* again, have **Data set course** for the **Unity Device**. After arriving at the Unity Device, **Captain Pentara** will decloak and **talk** with you. Shortly after speaking with her, Admiral Brodnack will appear and threaten to engage you. In **response**, **select evasive maneuvers—do not fire upon the Chodak**.

Both Admiral Brodnack and Captain Pentara launch in shuttles, and Picard will immediately follow suit. After arriving at the Unity Device, **walk** to the **Bay Interior**. Have the entire team **step** on the **pad** located in the center of the room. Only Picard will appear on the other side, without his tricorder or phaser.

Walk to the **left**, and a **Chodak Guardian** will **speak** briefly with you. **Continue** to the **left** and **talk** to **Pentara** and **Brodnack**, then **walk** to the **shuttle**.

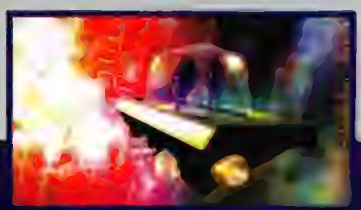
After arriving at the center of the Unity Device, **agree** to an **alliance** with **Captain Pentara**. **Walk** through the **far left door**. A ghostlike image of Picard will appear briefly and confer with Captain Picard. **Speak** with **Admiral Brodnack** and select, **"Yes, let's get on with it."** **Talk** with **Admiral Brodnack** again regarding how the **table game** is played.

Use the **table**, then **examine** it. **Place** your **half disk** in the **left receptacle** and **press** the **button**. **Speak** with **Pentara** and bring up **working together** again. **Use** the **table** again, **pressing** the **button** to deliver yet another jolt to Admiral Brodnack. When **Admiral Brodnack admits defeat**, saying that the next jolt will kill him, **speak** with



Pentara and select, **"Even if we defeat Brodnack here, the Chodak will still have to be dealt with."** Then, when **speaking** with **Admiral Brodnack**, **choose** the response that ends with, **"Will you help us?"**

Walk over to the **generator** and **look** at **it**. **Look** at the **common terminal**, the **lower air gap**, **field coil** and **upper air gap**. **Exit** the **generator** and **use** the **table**, **taking** your **half disk** from the table. **Combine** the **two half disks**



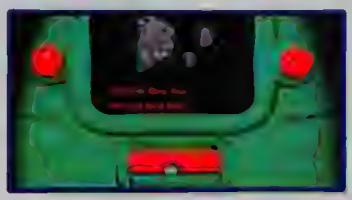
together to form a **whole disk** and go back to the **generator**, **placing** the **disk** in the **lower air gap**. Exit, and both Brodnack and Pentara will give you their half disks. **Combine these** to make **two more full disks**, and **insert both** into the **lower air gap** on the **generator**,

negating the force field.

Walk to the **room** to the **right**. **Click** on your **artifact** until **Picard**, **Pentara** and **Brodnak** have all crossed the chasm. **Pick** up the **symbol** and **walk** through the **doorway** to the **right**. **Walk** again to the **right**, **using** the **symbol** on the **door** to the far right. **Enter** that **room** and **use** the **panel** by the **individual** in the **stasis field**. When Kalban thaws, he'll question Picard. **Reply** with **"The Unity Device should be used for the good of all creatures."**

Proceed further to the **right**, **enter** the **tower** in the background and **speak** with the **Chodak Guardian**. The

Guardian will offer the **final test** for Picard regarding a Borg invasion fleet: to destroy the fleet or destroy the entire race. **Choose neither** by **selecting deactivate panel** and **choosing Yes** to confirm.



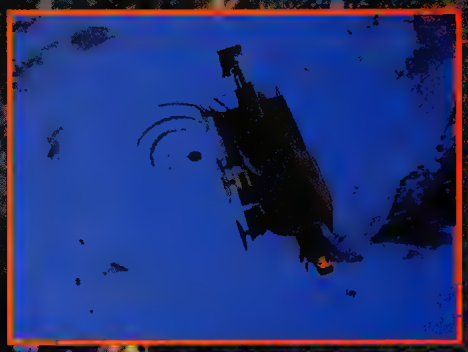
Congratulations! You've solved *A Final Unity* and can now sit back, relax and be treated to the impressive ending cinematic sequence. And while it's been a pleasure serving as the *Enterprise*'s Empath on this journey, I sense other strategy guides waiting for my delicate touch. **Beam me out.**

Strategy Guide

Domark for IBM PC CD

by Kevin J. McCann

THE ORION CONSPIRACY



There was a time when Devlin considered his life safe and routine, an employee of one of Earth's largest conglomerates, exploring frontier systems aboard a research vessel. But then war entered the picture, destroying the vessel with only Devlin escaping. Injured during his flight, he was then unable to work for the company, subsequently ostracizing his family from other working families. His wife was the next to go, and last, but not least, now his son has died. And you thought you had your share of bad trips.

Arriving at his son's research lab for the funeral procession, an anonymous note tips Devlin that his son's demise wasn't an accident but outright murder. Devlin doesn't exactly live a charmed life. It's up to you, however, to help him solve the mystery of his son's death, discover the perpetrator and return the deed. After all, if there's anything that Devlin deserves, it's a little justice. And maybe, just maybe, this time around Devlin can find some redemption.

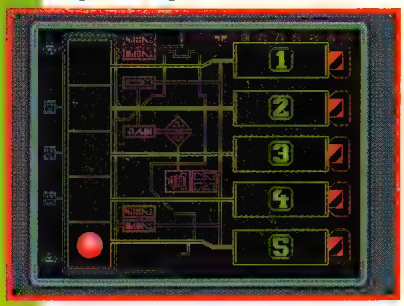
That's where I come into play, serving as your reference computer. I'm along for the ride to make sure that you don't mess up Devlin's last chance, giving you a complete guide to assist you in making Devlin's day. Best of all, unlike virtually everyone else Devlin encounters, you can trust me. No, really.

Station Layout

The Orion Conspiracy takes place aboard the Kobayashi research station, which in itself is divided into three primary areas. These areas are the **A**, **B** and **D** sections.

The **B** section is the largest area, comprising five separate levels. The **first level** contains the **volleyball court**, **weight/locker room** and **bar**. On the **second level**, there's the **lab**, **medical bay** and **hydroponics gardens**. **Level 2** also contains the only accessways to sections **A**, **C** and **D**, the former through a shuttle and the latter two through elevators C and D. **Level 3** is primarily **crew quarters**, including **Danny's room**, Devlin's deceased son. **Level 4** is another crew deck where the **kitchen** is located. The **fifth level** doesn't see any real action in the game.

The **A** section is where the **Mogami-Hudson scientists** perform their work. You can also find the **transport pod** and **engineering** here as well.



Within the **D** section, you'll find three main levels. **Level 3** consists of the **scout craft bay** and **shuttle navigation computer room**. The **storeroom** and **catacombs** are on **Level 4**, and **Level 5** is the entrance to the **observation pod**.

Last, there is another area that is considerably smaller than the others, and that's the **C** section, comprising only the **armory room.** In order to make things easier to find, I've abbreviated levels throughout the guide. For example, **B3** refers to **Section B, Level 3**.

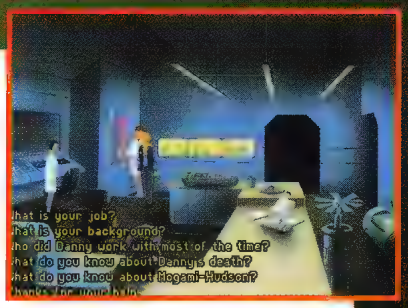
The Search Begins

After receiving the note from an anonymous "friend," it's time to start your own little investigation into the matter. However, your stay on Cerberus is limited to a short duration. Thus, the first thing you should do is get more time. The shuttle is your only immediate threat to being sent away soon, so disabling the shuttle will do the trick.

Blocking you is the fact that you don't have access to the shuttle bay. **Exit** your **quarters** and search for **Brooks**, the shuttle pilot, who can be found wandering the hallways on **B2**. She's got what you want, and the best way to get the access passes is by **challenging her** to a game of **basketball**. After she accepts, **ride** the elevator to **B1**.

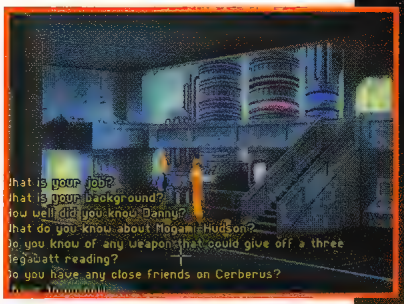
When she's out on the basketball court waiting for you, it's time to spring into action. Slip past her and **go** into the **Gym** located on the **left** of the court and **open Brooks' locker**, **gaining** you an **Elevator Passcard D**. Also **search Brooks' jacket**, **obtaining** the necessary **NAVCOM passcard**. Be sure to **put** the **jacket back** so you don't arouse any suspicion.

Your next step is to locate the shuttle navigation computer. **Take** the **elevator** down to **B2** and **walk** all the way to the right until you reach **Elevator D**. **Use** the **control** panel and descend to **D3**. **Proceed** to the **Docking Bay** and **put** the **ID Card** in the **Shuttle's Navigation Computer**. **Erase** the shuttle's **memory banks**, causing the shuttle to be grounded for a week, giving you the time you need to discover what really happened to your son.


What is your job?
What is your background?
Who did Danny work with most of the time?
What do you know about Danny's death?
What do you know about Mogami-Hudson?

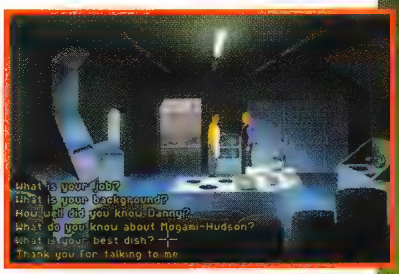
Walk over and **see Ruth Bernard**, the Chief Kobayashi Scientist, whose office can be found in the room just left of Elevator D on **B2**. **Ask Bernard** what she knows of **Danny's death**. She'll conduct some research on your behalf, discovering that there was a three-megawatt flare of energy produced by the probe where Danny died. Explosives aren't her specialty, but the resident war veteran, Meyer, knows more.

Walk to the **far left** of **B2** to reach the **shuttle**. After the shuttle transfers you to **Section A**, the Mogami-Hudson area, **walk left** again until you reach **engineering**. **Talk** to **Meyer** and ask about the **energy flare**. His reply confirms that a concussion charge could give off enough energy for the blast, but that there aren't any concussion charges aboard the station. Speaking with other crew members will prove mostly frivolous, as they're very tight-lipped.

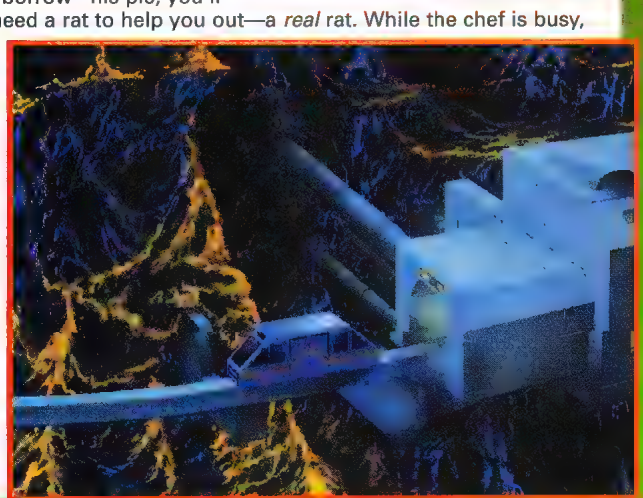

What is your job?
What is your background?
How well did you know Danny?
What do you know about Mogami-Hudson?
Do you know of any weapons that could give off a three megawatt reading?
Do you have any close friends on Cerberus?

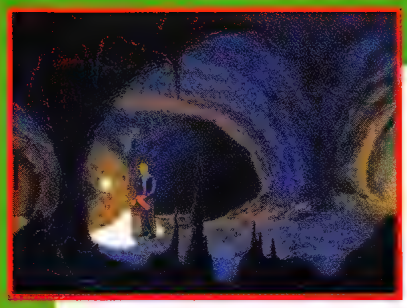
That is, all of them except for Rowland, who shares the office with Ruth Bernard. **See Rowland** and **ask** about the **concussion charge**. He'll ask for a blueberry pie in payment before he parts with any of his knowledge regarding concussion charges.

Fortunately, there just so happens to be a **blueberry pie** in the kitchen on **B4**. *Un*fortunately, the cook, Jay Chandra, is extremely possessive of his accomplishments in the kitchen—including, of course, the blueberry pie that you need. **Ask Chandra** about the **best dish**, in turn, having the cook focus his efforts on proving his culinary skill to Devlin.


What is your job?
What is your background?
How well did you know Danny?
What do you know about Mogami-Hudson?
What is your best dish?
Thank you for talking to me

In order to divert Chandra long enough to "borrow" his pie, you'll need a rat to help you out—a *real* rat. While the chef is busy,

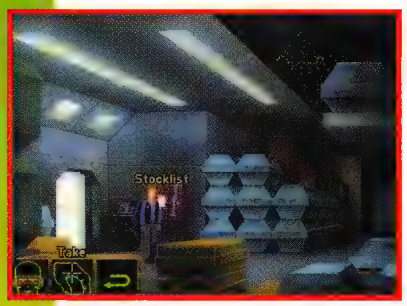




take the **elevator** back to **B2**, stroll over to **Elevator D** and take it down to **D4**. Walk past the storeroom and into the **catacombs**. Nearby is an occupied rathole. Walk further into the catacombs, **pick up** the **lamp**, then **return** to the **rathole**. **Wait** for the **rat** to **exit** his rathole, then immediately **put** the **lamp** in front of the **rathole**, blocking the entrance. The rat is now trapped outside of its home, but you're not fast enough to catch it.

It's time to **visit engineering** again over at the Mogami-Hudson area in **Section A**. **Take** the **shuttle** over from **B2**, **enter** the **engine room** and **pick up** the **fire extinguisher**. **Head back** to the rat on level **D4** and **use** your newly acquired mousetrap—the **fire extinguisher**—to **freeze** the **rat**. **Pick up** the chilled **rat** and walk back to the **kitchen** on **B4**.

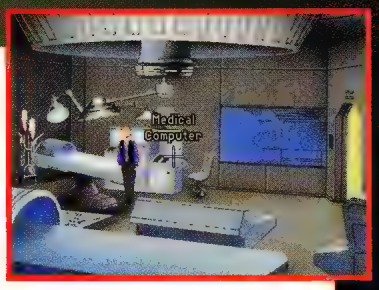
During your absence, Chandra has completed his best dish and is waiting for you to consume it. While the dish may look tempting, you're here to sniff out clues, not eat food. So **drop** the stiff **rat** into the **chicken korma**. **Walk** into the **kitchen** and **complain** to **Chandra** about the extra ingredient. While Chandra is confused at the addition of the "ratsicle," **take** the **pie** from the kitchen larder and leave.



You'll **find Rowland** in his quarters on **B3**, behind the door located at **Crew E**. **Hand over** the **blueberry pie** and he'll inform you that **Bina Raman** was working with concussion charges. It's time to have a little chat with Raman.

Take the **elevator** back up to **B2**, **walk** over to **Bernard's lab**, then **enter** the **backroom** where Raman is working. **Discuss** the **concussion charges** with her. She'll admit to the fact that concussion charges are used, but under the pseudonym **Gauge 3 Wrenches**. With that in mind, **proceed** then to the **storeroom** and **get** the **old stock inventory** from the storeroom on **D4**.

After taking the old stock inventory, it's time to compare it against the new stock inventory. **Find Susan LaPaz** and **ask** her for the **latest stock inventory** and **compare** the **two stock inventories**. This will unearth the fact that a concussion charge was taken within four hours of Devlin's son's death. **Ask LaPaz** about who has **access** to the **Armory** where the charges are stored.



A little bit of crew information would be vital right about now, so **proceed** to the **Sickbay** on **B2**, in the office to the left of Bernard's lab. The only problem is that Doctor Chu won't let you near the medical computer. Go back and **see Rowland** again on **B3**, **Crew E** and **mention** the fact that **he's looking ill**. In turn, he'll call the doctor over. While Doctor Chu is diagnosing Rowland, it's time to perform a little check-up of your own **using** the **medical computer** in **Sickbay** back on **B2**.

Be sure to examine everything thoroughly in the medical computer's database, as the information is important in more ways than just narrowing down suspects. One of these items is the fact that LaPaz is pregnant, something she doesn't want the others to know.

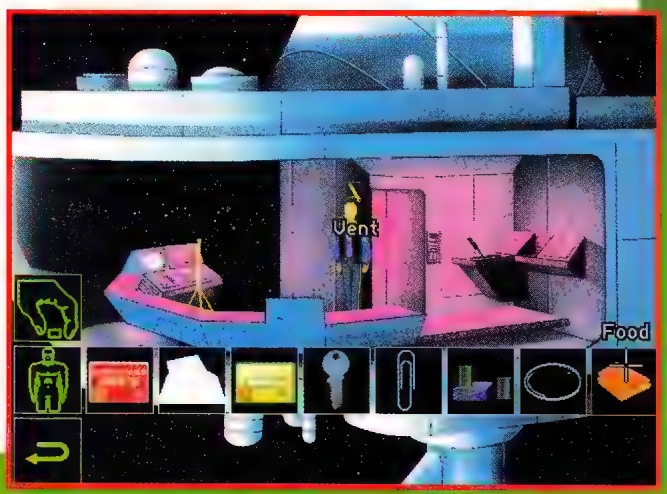
Walk over and **chat** with **LaPaz** again, blackmailing her into giving you the **key** required to access Danny's personal belongings. **Take** a quick **trip** to **Danny's quarters** on **B3** in **Crew B**, **using** the **key** to **unlock** his bedside **cupboard**. **Pick** up the **tray** that holds all the letters.

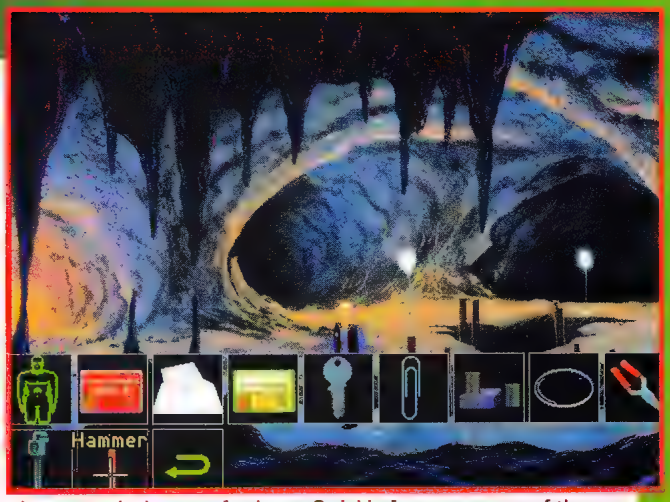
Search through all of his belongings in the **tray**, **examining** the **letters** and **taking** the **paper clip** into inventory. **Search** the **letters** thoroughly until you **discover** the **photograph**. **Look** at the **photograph**, revealing Danny's significant other. Stunned and surprised, Devlin is immediately caught off-balance by the hot-tempered individual from the photograph, and before Devlin can reply, Danny's lover storms out of the room.

Making matter worse, others have witnessed the confrontation. Only moments later, LaPaz will enter the room, guiding Devlin to that individual's quarters, where what's left of Danny's lover remains. Naturally, Devlin is accused of murder by Captain Shannon, and you're swiftly held under house arrest within the Observation Pod.

Luckily, it's not much of a prison. **Take** the **telescope** and **dismantle** it until all you're left with is the **lens** and the **metal tube**. Now **unscrew** the **grill** by the door with the **lens**, **dis-**

hat is your job?
hat is your background?
ow well did you know Danny?
hat do you know about Mogami-Hudson?
ou look quite ill.
ve really got to go now

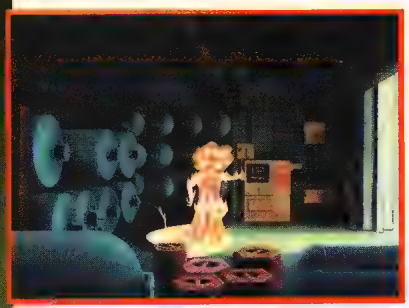




mantle the **grill**, **place** the **tube** into the **airpipe**, then **block** the **tube** with the **biscuit** from the ration pack. With the oxygen flow cut off from the Observation Pod, the computer will automatically cancel the lock and open the door.

Upon exiting the Observation Pod, Devlin will run into Alison Gates, who is the person responsible for giving you the note regarding Danny's death at the start of this whole ordeal. Stealth is of the utmost importance, since you're now a fugitive.

A breath of fresh air could do Devlin some good right about now. Guide him to the **Hydroponics Gardens** on **B2**, **taking** the **wire cutters** from the **shed**. After picking up the wire cutters, proceed to the **engineering area** back in **Section A**. **Pick up** the **wrench** and **proceed** to the **nearby Transport Pod**.



The Transport Pod is unaccountably filled with strange cocoons. Gates enters and can offer no further insight as to the origin of the cocoons. After a little while, Doctor Chu will appear, revealing herself to be an alien creature intent on disposing of the entire crew. Gates is then killed by Chu, which gives you time to escape back into the engine room.

Enter the **fuel storage area** and **switch off** the **power**, then **cut** the **cable** with the **wire cutters**. **Turn** the **power back** on and have Devlin act as a lure, **insulting** the **creature** and guiding it toward the live wire cables. Upon touching the live wire, the creature will be shocked and temporarily stunned—but not for long. Quickly **hammer** one of the **fuel tank pipes** with the wrench, dousing the creature with lots of fuel. Instant alien flambé! And Chandra didn't think you could cook....

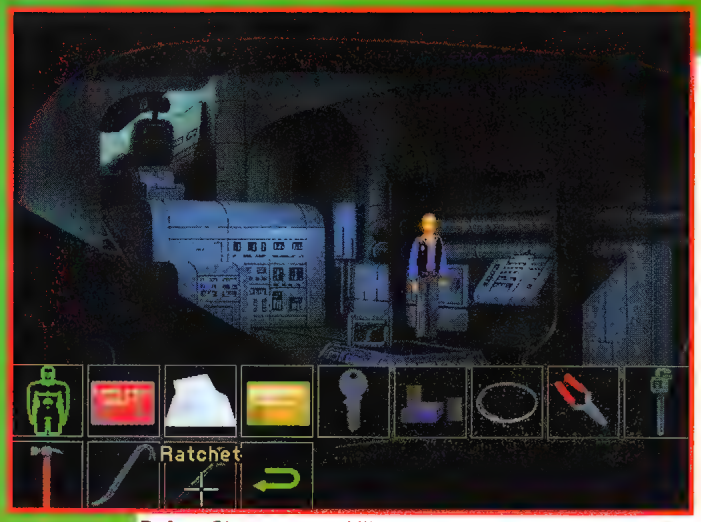
On the plus side, you've killed the alien. Then Meyer, who appears shortly after the explosion, delivers the bad news—the station has been badly damaged by your little cookout and will soon fall out of its geosynchronous orbit and into the black hole. D'oh!

Upon exiting the engine room, you'll meet up with the eavesdropping Rowland, who heard everything in your conversation with Meyer. Terrified, Rowland takes the nearest escape pod and blasts off. Not only has Rowland stolen the escape pod, but he's inadvertently taken the alien pods with him. Devlin has no choice now but to destroy the pod, which will kill Rowland as well. Bummer.

Time is of the essence now, so race down to the **catacombs** on **D4**, **grabbing** the **hammer** found to the far right **excavation site**. Swing by the **Gym** on **B1**, **grab** the **chest expander**, then make tracks to the **bar** to **pick up** Chandra's **crowbar**, also located on **B1**. Once you've picked up all of these items, **go** to **Elevator C2**, found **behind** the **control room** on **B2**, to reach the **Armory**.

Pry open the **control panel** with the **crowbar**, and keep it open by **using** the **chest expander**. **Use** the **lens** to see which **circuit** to short out, then **straighten** out the **paper clip using** the **hammer**. **Use** the newly straightened **paper clip** to short the circuit, then **activate** the **control panel**, **opening** the **elevator door**. **Take** the **elevator** and head up to the **Armory**. Once inside, **use** the **periscope** for the **laser cannon** to target and destroy the escape pod with Rowland and the aliens.

Captain Shannon will accost you now, revealing himself to be the real murderer of your son and your son's lover.

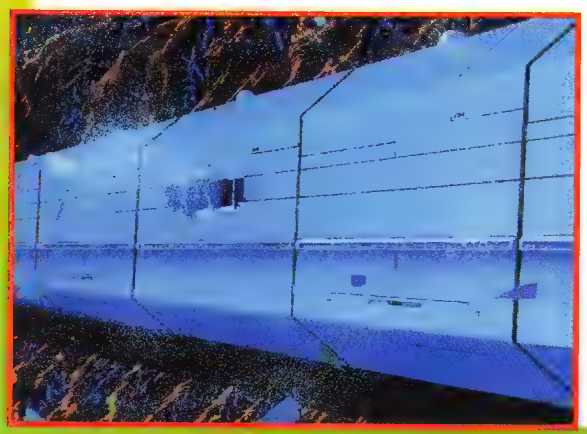


Before Shannon can kill you, Meyer intercedes and kills Shannon. Explain to Meyer about the aliens. Meyer will respond that the only way to fix the station's engines is from the outside, forcing Devlin to ignore his prior injury in order to save the remaining crew. But you'll need a zero-gravity ratchet first.

Take Devlin back to **D3** and over to the **Shuttle's tool locker**, located in the same room where you originally erased the shuttle's memory. **Open** the **locker** and **grab** the necessary **Zero-G ratchet**. On your way back to Meyer, you'll run into LaPaz, who informs you that the security chief, Ward, has gone over the edge, killing several crew members he believes are aliens.

Go down with LaPaz to the living quarters where

Ward is being held at bay by Brooks and Raman. Before you can calm Ward down, Brooks jumps on him and, during the ensuing scuffle, one of Ward's grenades explodes, killing them both. Raman is also trapped by a



fallen console, with the whole corridor threatening to decompress in minutes. The cook, Chandra, decides to stay behind with her. So your next cheery task is to seal off the corridor, protecting the rest of the station and leaving Chandra and Raman to imminent death.

Move to the **storeroom** on **D4**, **taking** the **laser welder**. Return back to the corridor and perform the grim duty of **sealing** the **corridor's doors** shut with the **laser welder**. The station is still failing fast, though, so it's on to the next task of repairing the engines.

Meet Meyer in the **docking bay** found on **D3** to the right and **use** the **Scout Craft** to get a spare part from the damaged probe, subsequently repairing the engines. After returning, you'll find that dissension is still blossoming aboard the station.

Proceed to the **armory locker** located at **C1** and

use the **crowbar** to force it **open**. **Take both concussion charges**—labeled as **mines**—then head over to the **Shuttle area**. After blowing up a sizable chunk of the Mogami-Hudson station, **take** the **shuttle** on **B2** over to **Section A** to look for any survivors. **Speak** with the **injured scientist** to discover what went wrong and **take** the **bottle** of **dissipation fluid** on the counter before you leave.

Before hunting down Waterman, **get** the **backup circuit** from **Brooks' skull** back on **B3**. With the chip in hand, walk over to **D3** and into the **shuttle navigation room** to **give Meyer** the **chip**. After handing over the chip, it's time to find and kill Waterman.

First head up to **B1** and **use** the **wire cutters** to cut down the **volleyball net**, **picking** the **net up**. The last thing we're going to do is let the aliens discover how volleyball is played! You're going to need LaPaz's help, so make a quick detour over to the **control center** on **B2** and **talk her** into coming along. Now **proceed** to the **Hydroponics Garden** to duel it out with the alien on **B2**. In the gardens, you'll find **Waterman** to the **far left** enjoying some dog food—literally. Walk out of that

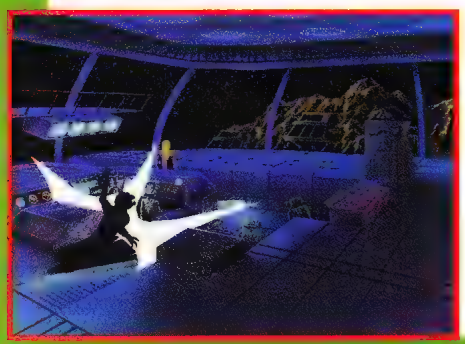
room, **place** the **net** over the **adjoining door** and **ask LaPaz** to act as **bait**. We all know aliens like women better.

The alien will entangle itself within the net, giving you time to **pour** the **dissipater fluid** on it, killing the alien. Hurry back to **Meyer** in the **shuttle navigation room** on **D3**. He'll inform you that the place is loaded with alien cocoons and that there's only one option left—blowing up the station. Damn! And after you repaired the stupid thing, too! On the bright side, virtually everyone else is dead, so you won't kill anyone.

Proceed to the **control center** and **switch** the **self-destruct on**—yes, it's *that easy* to blow up a space station! Make tracks back to the **shuttle navigation room**. When you arrive at the shuttle bay, you'll find out that yet *another* alien has turned off the self-destruct. **Head back** to the **self-destruct switch**, **turn** it *back* **on**, then **rig** it with the **mine**. The next time Mr. Alien tries to switch off the self-destruct, he'll be in for the charge of his life. After watching the alien become dust, Devlin will take off running back to the shuttle area where Meyer and LaPaz are waiting.

Into the Starry Black Yonder

Looking back as you blast off, the station explodes, leaving nothing behind. Out of a crew of over 20, only three survived. Congratulations! You've finished the light, witty and inspiring *Orion Conspiracy*. Oh, wait, wrong game. Well, at least *three* survived.



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MAIL ORDER MONSTERS

You'd think he would've learned his lesson after my piece on *M.U.L.E.*, but *noooo*. Once again, my close personal friend, Ron Dulin, has allowed me to commandeer *Reboot* and rant and rave about a creaky old game for my beloved (and still operational, missing W key and all) Commodore 64. This issue, I've chosen a bit of an obscurity: *Mail Order Monsters*, designed by the trio of Paul Reiche III, Evan Robinson and Nicky Robinson, and released by Electronic Arts in The Year of Our Lord 1984.

Mail Order Monsters allowed one or two players to create not-so-cute li'l critters called morphs (**M**ail **OR**der **P**sychon **H**eroes) and pit them against each other in an overhead-view battle reminiscent of the scrapping sequence in *Archon*, an earlier Electronic Arts classic codesigned by Reiche. In the simplest of *MOM*'s three difficulty levels, players would throw together quick-and-dirty morphs and jump right into battle. In the more complex levels, players created and managed an entire stable of morphs.

For its time—hell, for *any* time—*MOM* had a healthy number of game play options. There were 12 different morph types, ranging from the strong, speedy Lionbear to the weak, sluggish Amoeboid, and each morph could be souped up with a total of 20 different power-ups in four groups (movement, attack, defense and natural aids—such as hands or tentacles to operate certain weapons). Best of all were *MOM*'s combat options. Battles took place on a huge variety of randomly generated terrain, from a group of islands to a mountain chain. Morphs didn't necessarily need to fight each other either; they could also play "Capture the Flags" or fight together against a computer-controlled group of creatures called "The Horde." (Is it coincidence that Reiche later designed a game called *The Horde*? Nuh-uh.)

Of *MOM*'s three designers, Paul Reiche III has been the busiest. His credits are almost as long as John Gotti's rap sheet, but here's a roundup of his more popular games: *Archon* (EA), *Murder on the Zinderneuf* (EA), *Archon II: Adept* (EA), *Star Control* (Accolade), *Star Control II* (Accolade/Crystal Dynamics) and *The Horde* (Crystal Dynamics), the first game from the design group Toys For Bob. (Fred Ford, codesigner of *Star Control I* and *II*, is another member of TFB.) Fortunately, Reiche had very little to do with *Archon Ultra*, a sadly flawed update of *Archon* released by SSI in 1994. *Un*fortunately, Reiche also has very little to do with *Star Control III*, which is being worked on by Legend Entertainment, they of *Gateway* and other graphic adventures. It'll be very interesting to see if they can improve on *Star Control II*'s humor, detailed storyline and deep game play.

What about the Robinsons, you ask? Nicky Robinson is currently employed at Studio 3DO, where she just wrapped up work on *Killing Time*, a *Doom*-style first-person shooter. Nicky was too busy to grant me an interview in time for this article (sigh), but she was kind enough to let me know that she and Evan have since divorced (yikes), and that Evan's still in the biz, although I confess I have no idea what he's up to. (Evan, if you're reading this, send COMPUTER PLAYER some shamelessly self-promoting E-mail!)

Will we ever see an updated *MOM*? When I interviewed Reiche last year for a strategy guide on *The Horde*, he hinted that Toys For Bob had toyed (snort) with the idea. My drool cup runneth over when I think of *Mail Order Monsters* with more morphs, more power-ups, SVGA graphics, MIDI music and modem/network play. Most likely, though, *MOM* will remain one of the dozens of great games from the '80s that a new generation of computer gamers will never get to experience. What a bloody shame. (And what a depressing way to end the column. Sorry.)

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